Drama is one of the oldest forms of art in which humans have engaged. From prehistoric times, drama has been an important part of human life. It is also one of the earliest art forms humans perform from birth. An infant imitating sounds and movements is actually acting or dramatizing. Even children playing make-believe, a very natural kind of play, are involved in a form of creative dramatics. Special talent is not necessary—everyone can participate in drama.

**STAGES OF PLAY**

Early childhood educators have recognized for some time the importance of play in a young child's life. Many books and articles have been written on the subject, and much research has been conducted regarding the value of play. Many parents underestimate play's importance. When evaluating preschool centers for their children, they often look for sites that stress academics rather than those that emphasize play. However, findings indicate that children thrive better in an environment that allows for hands-on experiences and much opportunity for creative play.

There are four natural stages of social development for children in relation to dramatic play.

**Solitary Play**—Children play totally by themselves. A child who is playing with a doll, feeding it, and talking to it as if she were the mother is involved in solitary play.

**Parallel Play**—Children are near each other and are engaged in separate play, occasionally imitating the others’ actions. The children are cognizant of each other but are not playing together. Their play is independent, and they are unable to be involved yet in the give-and-take of cooperative play.

**Associative Play**—Children act out their own roles but loosely adopt a play situation of others they are associated with, or in proximity of, while playing. An example is children playing house. The children assume different roles, and they might briefly interact, but they more or less decide and act out their own parts.

**Cooperative Play**—Children now play with each other and assume roles where they interact with each other. Their
play is dependent on others. They are usually acting out an entire story. Children playing school, and interacting with each other while doing this, would be an example of cooperative play.

Preschool- and kindergarten-age children are able to imitate or make sounds presented in stories or to repeat a simple refrain. They can also perform some simple pantomime. By the second or third grade, they can perform improvisation, successfully dramatize stories using simple props and costumes, and perform puppetry or reader’s theater.

**BENEFITS OF USING DRAMA WITH CHILDREN**

Children respond well to dramatic activities for many reasons. The following are just some of the benefits of using drama with children.

- Children have the opportunity to think creatively and develop their imagination.
- They learn to think independently, for example, “How will I act out my role?”
- Drama helps children develop self-esteem.
- It teaches children about social cooperation and group interaction.
- Children learn about group planning and how to have a productive group experience (e.g., the group decides how to perform a scene together).
- Children develop new vocabulary and learn more about written language through acting.
- Acting is a positive way to learn speech patterns and oral expression.
- Drama helps children understand others different from themselves and allows them to put themselves “in another’s shoes.”
- Children have the opportunity to release their emotions and use their creative energy.
- Children can become more familiar with good literature.
- Drama is fun for children!

**CONSIDERATIONS WHEN USING DRAMA WITH CHILDREN**

Not all children are able to perform creative dramatics easily. Some children are self-conscious, others are very shy or timid, some are quiet and have difficulty projecting, and others are show-offs and want to monopolize the “stage.” There are children who have short attention spans, and others who are easily distracted. The adult needs to find ways to involve all children, despite these limitations.

- It is also important to have plenty of space for children when involving them with drama. Children need to be able to move freely and have room to act out their parts. However, too large of a space can also be problematic. A large gymnasium or meeting room is not always ideal. Voices may echo or distort, and it is hard for young children to project their voices in a large, wide-open space.

**SELECTING STORIES FOR DRAMA**

What should an adult look for when selecting stories to act out? Here are some points to consider.

- Make sure the story has conflict.
- The story should have action.
- Characters should have distinct personalities.
- There should be strong dialogue that is independent of much description.
- The story should appeal to children.
- There should be a happy ending or one in which vice is punished and virtue
is rewarded. (Young children expect stories to have poetic justice.)

Many of the folk or fairy tales are good for young children to dramatize. Examples are *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *Cinderella*, *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, *The Little Red Hen*, and *The Elves and the Shoemaker*.

**DRAMA EXPERIENCES TO USE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN**

From storytelling to reader’s theater, and from puppetry to magic, there is a wide variety of dramatic experiences for young children. The following drama experiences are ones we selected for our various extensions.

**Creative Dramatics**

The term *creative dramatics* is typically used to describe the improvised drama of preschool children. Creative dramatics are not practiced but rather spontaneous action and dialogue (if used) that is created by the participants. Nothing is written down, nor do children memorize anything. This is one of the earliest forms of drama that children engage in, and it may last only a few minutes. If you used creative dramatics with a story, the actions would be different each time.

**Storytelling with Props and Participation**

We use the term *storytelling* very loosely, because true storytelling is done without books, where the teller uses voice and limited action to relay the story. With very young children, however, there is more value in sharing picture book stories, so that they can see the wonderful illustrations. Adding simple props can make the story sharing much more dramatic, particularly for children today, who are more “visual” listeners than children in the past. Moreover, the children can touch or play with the prop later, and many times children will retell the story holding the prop.

**Telling Stories through Movement**

Stories can be told through movement, for instance, pantomime and improvisation. Dance or music can also extend the story, as indicated in some of our activities below.

Pantomime is a very natural means of expression whereby children act out a character or a part of a story without words but rather through their actions. No sound, props, or objects are used. However, children can use facial expressions, gestures, or other movements in their nonverbal communication.

Unlike pantomime, improvisation is usually based on a story and unfolds as an informal drama. Children may speak, but there is not a script, so no lines need to be memorized. Often the story is made up as children are acting it out, and they determine their own dialogue, movement, and action.

**Choral Speaking**

Choral speaking is when a group of children read or recite phrases or refrains under the direction of the storyteller. An advantage of choral speaking is that a larger number of children can be engaged. There are five different ways to do choral reading—in unison, antiphonal speaking, cumulative choral speaking, solo choral speaking, and line-around choral speaking.

When the whole group speaks together it is called unison. In antiphonal speaking, children are divided into two groups and each group has its own part. In cumulative choral speaking (which we have used with Eric Carle’s *Today Is Monday*), the storyteller has different parts for either individuals or groups of children, and each group (or individual) is added as the story builds. Solo choral speaking allows individual participation, and line-around choral speaking is solo work within the group, with each child being assigned an individual line.

**Reader’s Theater**

Reader’s theater is one of the easiest forms of drama to use with elementary-age children. There
is no elaborate scenery, costumes and props are not necessary (though sometimes children wear cardboard signs with their characters’ names), and, most importantly, children do not need to memorize lines. Actors use their voices rather than movement. The audience uses imagination to picture the setting and the action.

After selecting a piece to use for reader’s theater (“Drama Resource Books,” at the end of this chapter, lists several books with scripts for children as young as first grade), you may wish to have the children read aloud the script first in round-robin fashion as a group, and then assign parts. The children should practice the script several times until they are familiar with their parts; the adult can help with any pronunciations needed. Next, fasten each script inside a colored folder so that the pages are easy to turn and the audience is not distracted by readers constantly shifting or turning pages. For each individual role, use a bright colored marker to highlight that character’s name wherever it appears in the script so that the child will remember when to read. Children can hold their scripts in their hands to perform, but a better method is to have a music stand for each child, and place the script on the music stand. This allows the children to keep their heads up (rather than bending their heads down while reading the script), and their voices will better project out to the audience. If you do not have music stands, tell the children to focus their eyes as often as possible on an object on the back wall (such as a clock) or to focus on two different people, at different angles, near the back of the audience. If you do not want children to stand, they can sit on stools that rotate. When they are not involved in a particular scene, they can rotate in their chairs so their backs face the audience.

The most common problem when children perform reader’s theater is to get them to project their voices, but by practicing several times, children gain the confidence to speak more loudly.

### Puppets or Masks

The variety of puppets is nearly endless: finger and hand puppets; marionettes; puppets made from paper, sticks, mitts, cups, rods, and handkerchiefs; and shadow puppets, to name just a few. Masks can be made from a wide variety of materials. Puppets and masks can be elaborate or very easy, fun projects for kids to make. Who has not made a spoon puppet at some time?

There are excellent puppets to buy, of course. Folkmanis makes some of our favorites. The quality of these puppets is unmatched, and schools and libraries can buy at a large discount if the puppets are used for educational purposes. To buy just a few, go to their web site, [http://www.folkmanis.com](http://www.folkmanis.com), and click on the section for buying puppets at Internet stores. Many Internet puppet vendors sell Folkmanis puppets at this site, but we regularly buy from Act II.

Puppet stages can be elaborate (we have made our own out of conduit), but an expensive stage is not necessary. Simply turn a table on its side and cover it with a sheet, or hang a sheet or blanket from a doorway. Or cut a hole in a large carton or box, creating a “stage” where the puppets can perform, or cut a hole in a smaller box and place it on a covered table. Puppeteers sit behind the table and have their puppets perform on the “stage.”

Two of our favorite puppet sites are [http://www.puppeteers.org](http://www.puppeteers.org), the official site of Puppeteers of America, and [http://sagecraft.com/puppetry/index.html](http://sagecraft.com/puppetry/index.html), the Puppetry Home Page, which lists puppet organizations, festivals, information on using puppets, puppet building, performers, and more.

### Charades

In charades, one person tries to get an audience to guess a word or phrase by using pantomime. Although young children may need to watch an adult try it first, charades quickly becomes a dramatic activity that engages both the audience and the performers.

### Magic

Some readers might not consider magic to be a dramatic activity. However, we feel that a magician
deliberately “acts” in a way to try to baffle the audience. Often a costume is involved (a top hat at minimum), the magician needs to practice several times, and sometimes the magician memorizes the “ patter” used while performing to distract the audience’s attention from any sleight of hand. Thus, magic is a fine fit for a drama extension.

It is now time to be dazzled by some fun drama experiences!

DRAMA EXTENSIONS

Anansi and the Magic Stick
Eric A. Kimmel; illustrated by Janet Stevens
(Holiday House)

Lazy Anansi the spider discovers Hyena’s secret to keeping his house so neat—a magic stick. After stealing it, Anansi creates chaos, including flooding the land when he falls asleep after asking the stick to water his plants. All turns out well as the water forms a lake, and the animals build new homes on the lakeshore. Illustrator Stevens used watercolors, watercolor crayons, acrylics, and digital elements to create her colorful, fun illustrations.

EXTENSION: Magic

MATERIALS

“magic” stick prop

PROCEDURE

Teach the children the first and last lines of the rhyme—“Hocus-pocus, Magic Stick . . . Quick, quick, quick!”—and have them repeat these words at the appropriate time in the story. Also, add a simple prop—a pencil, a wooden spoon, or such—for a magic stick to wave while telling the story. Then, after consulting several easy nonfiction magic books, teach the children several tricks so they can perform their own magic show. Here are two good magic books with simple tricks—Lawrence Leyton’s My First Magic Book and Let’s Make Magic, by Jon Day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Point out the self-drawn pictures of the author and illustrator on the back end flap of the book. Can the children find these same pictures elsewhere in the book? Mention that illustrators often “hide” personal touches in their illustrations such as their profiles, a picture of their pet, or their name, and so forth.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS

This Anansi tale has similarities to the story of “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” which can be found on the video Fantasia, by Walt Disney. Or share another story about magic that gets out of control, such as Strega Nona, by Tomie De Paola.

Bark, George
Jules Feiffer
(HarperCollins)

George, a dog, has trouble remembering how to bark, much to his mother’s chagrin. After going to the vet, they discover that George can meow, quack, oink, and moo, because of the live animals inside of his stomach. Once the vet removes them, George can again bark until he passes a crowd of people, and then he begins saying “Hello.” Feiffer’s illustrations appear as cartoons, adding to the hilarity of this simple canine tale.

EXTENSION: Storytelling with Props

MATERIALS

stuffed animal dog
small beanbag cat
small beanbag duck
small beanbag pig
small beanbag cow
lingerie laundry bag or garbage bag
poster board
colored markers

PROCEDURE

Ahead of time, the storyteller prepares four poster board speech balloons as shown in figure 3.1.
Each poster board sign should have an animal sound on it for the cat, duck, pig, and cow as given in the book (Meow, Quack, Oink, and Moo). Next, attach a small lingerie laundry bag to the reverse side of a table, so that children do not see it, and place the dog on the table. Add the beanbag animals to the bag in the order they appear in the story. When telling the story, hold up the speech balloon signs at the appropriate time so that the children can make the animal sound. When the vet reaches in the dog’s mouth and pulls out the animals one by one, the storyteller pretends to reach down the dog’s mouth and pulls out the animals one by one. This is a great example of a participation story with props.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

If you do not have access to a large stuffed dog, you may use a smaller one and place it on a table that has a tablecloth or an overhanging cover to hide the bag attached to the back of the table. Work from behind the table to retrieve the animals from the dog’s “mouth.”

**ADDITIONAL EXTENSION**

Share the book *Martha Speaks*, by Susan Meddaugh, or any of her other titles about Martha, a dog that speaks like a human after eating vegetable soup. Then, have the children make sock puppet dogs. For each child you will need a knee-high sock for the body, a piece of oval-shaped poster board folded in half for the mouth, two ears, and buttons for the nose and eyes. Slide the folded poster board inside the sock for the mouth, and then have each child try on the sock to mark where the nose and eyes should be. Hot glue the buttons in place, and add the ears. Children then slide their hands inside the socks with their fingers on top of the folded poster board and their thumbs on the bottom to make their dogs “speak.” Then have the children talk like Martha or George.

*Cinderella’s Rat*
Susan Meddaugh
(Houghton Mifflin)

This story’s narrator is a rat that was turned into a coachman by Cinderella’s fairy godmother. His sister rat accompanies him to the castle, and when another boy tries to kill her, a series of misunderstandings and magical spells will keep children thoroughly amazed. At the end, the coachman narrator turns back into a rat at midnight, but his
sister remains a human. The animated art only adds to the wit and cleverness of this twisted Cinderella tale.

EXTENSION: Improvisation

MATERIALS

none

PROCEDURE

Before presenting a twisted tale, make sure the children are very familiar with the original version. Prior to sharing Cinderella’s Rat, have children retell the folktale Cinderella by acting out the parts without a script. This is an example of improvising a known tale. First, ask children to name the characters; then, assign parts to volunteers. Extra children can be attendees at the ball. After this performance, share the twisted version, Cinderella’s Rat. Talk with children about how elements of the original tale are sustained in this newer rendition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

You may want to add props when children are improvising the original tale. Add a broom, a clear plastic shoe with sparkles, a pumpkin, and ragged and dress-up clothing.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS

There are many other versions of the Cinderella tale from around the world. Some of our favorites are Cendrillon, by Daniel San Souci; Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters, by John Steptoe; The Rough-Face Girl, by Rafe Martin; Yeh-Shen, by Ai-Ling Louie; Cinderella, by Diane Goode; and The Korean Cinderella, by Shirley Climo. Share some of these variants, and then chart the similarities and differences between the tales. Do they begin and end the same way? Are there clues that help establish the origin of the tales and the different countries represented? Are the details related to the transformations similar? Compare the illustrations of the various picture books. Then have children vote on their favorite rendition.

Duck in the Truck

Jez Alborough
(HarperCollins)

A duck driving a truck gets stuck in the muck. A frog, a sheep in a jeep, and a goat try to help him get out and only succeed with the help of a rope and motorboat. The duck continues on his travels, unaware that the frog, sheep, and goat are still stuck in the muck. The playful rhyme and large animated illustrations add to the lively romp.

EXTENSION: Telling a Story through Movement

MATERIALS

brown Kraft (wrapping) paper (optional)

PROCEDURE

There are four characters in this story—a duck, a sheep, a frog, and a goat. Assign parts and have the children come to the front of the room. While telling the story, have each character come forward and help push the truck, as in the story. The truck can be imaginary, but the child should be told to push very hard. You can use brown Kraft paper on the floor to represent the muck. Or make this story into a participatory tale by having children add the extra words “in the muck” both times the phrase “the truck still stuck” appears in the text. Tell children to listen carefully for those words, and, as the storyteller, make sure you emphasize them. Also, at the end of the story, let them again supply the three words “in the muck” after you say the word “stuck.”

RECOMMENDATIONS

If you want all the children involved, here are two ideas. Divide participants into four groups, and have the ducks, the frogs, the sheep, and the goats pushing the truck at the appropriate time. Or use some of the children as props, assigning some volunteers to become the truck, one to be the rock, and several to be the vegetables in the back of the truck, which fly out when the truck bumps on the rock and becomes stuck. Continue in this way for the other characters and props, such as the jeep, until all children have participated. If you
have many children and need more assigned parts, add the jeep and the truck as additional roles.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION

Do an entire program on mud! Examples are the book Mud, by Mary Lyn Ray (found in chapter 2), and Lynn Plourde’s Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Rud (included in this chapter below).

**Fat Cat**
Margaret Read MacDonald; illustrated by Julie Paschkis (August House Little Folk)

This variant of a traditional Danish folktale details the antics of a very hungry cat that eats everything in his sight, including his friend the mouse. The mouse uses her scissors, which were also swallowed, to snap open the cat’s stomach so that all can escape but then uses her needle and thread to sew him back up. The vivid gouache paintings appear as folk art, fitting for this cumulative tale.

EXTENSION: Acting Out a Story with Props

MATERIALS
- a king-sized sheet
- cat ears
- safety scissors

PROCEDURE
Assign the following parts to children: cat, mouse, washerwoman, soldiers, king, and elephant. Have the cat wear ears, and drape the sheet around the child’s shoulders. Then, read the story and have the cat “swallow” the characters as given in the story. The cat “swallows” them at the appropriate time by enveloping them in the sheet and hiding them from the audience so that the cat appears to become fatter. The children who are “gobbled up” scrunch down under the sheet. Props can be imaginary, but we like to have the mouse hold child’s scissors so that when the characters pop out from under the sheet near the end of the story, the mouse can triumphantly hold up her scissors. This extension involves storytelling with limited props, creative drama, and simple pantomime.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Use any color sheet for the cat. A white sheet would be a white cat, a black sheet a black cat, or an orange or yellow sheet would keep the appearance of the illustrated cat in the story. We do not use many props for this story, but have the cat simply swallow imaginary swords and so forth. However, you may want to add poster board props.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION

Use the classic children’s song “The Cat Came Back” and have children join in the refrain. It is a fun song to sing with children, but the adult should be prepared to discuss why cruelty to animals should never occur and that there are homes for unwanted animals. Dean Wilson performs one of our favorite versions of this song on A Child at Heart. Some verses in this song may be objectionable because of violence, especially in light of current circumstances in our world. We find the Wilson version acceptable, but be certain to preview whatever version of this song you use.

**Five Little Monkeys Sitting in a Tree**
Eileen Christelow (Clarion)

Five little monkeys and their mother head to the river for a picnic supper. While Mama snoozes, the little monkeys climb a tree to tease a crocodile. One by one they disappear, to their mother’s frantic desperation, but alas, they are safe hiding in the tree. The traditional rhyme is accompanied by colored pencil drawings.

EXTENSION: Creative Drama with Motions

MATERIALS
- none
PROCEDURE

This is a perfect story for a creative drama experience with motions. Read the story and have the children hold up the correct number of fingers each time to represent the monkeys and then lay them on their opposite arms to represent the tree branch. Next, they can stick their thumbs in their ears and wiggle their fingers to tease the crocodile while using a high-pitched voice to mock him saying, “Can’t catch me!” Have them extend their arms in front as the crocodile’s jaw and snap them each time the crocodile snaps his jaw in the story.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Christelow currently has four other books about the five little monkeys (see “Bibliography of Picture Books Used in Drama Extensions” at the end of this chapter). Several of them are very adaptable to act out with motions or creative drama. For example, *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* lends itself well to active motion.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS

For a musical version of *Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed* that children can act out and sing along to, consult the *Five Little Monkeys* recording by Kimbo. For a flannel board presentation of other stories about monkeys and crocodiles, refer to *The Flannel Board Storytelling Book*, by Judy Sierra, listed under “Drama Resource Books” at the end of this chapter. Two different stories given in it would make good extensions: “Counting Crocodiles” is a tale from Indonesia, and “The Monkey and the Crocodile” is an Indian tale. Hand out the pieces of the story and have children bring them up and place them on the flannel board as you tell the story.

Going to the Zoo

Tom Paxton; illustrated by Karen Lee Schmidt (Morrow)

Paxton’s classic children’s song of Daddy taking his young children to the zoo even depicts the animals in the illustrations singing along. Dad is exhausted after the experience, but Mom dons her circus hat and sets the alarm to get up early the next morning to take the kids again. The musical score is contained on the end pages. Illustrator Schmidt uses watercolor and gouache for the fun-loving illustrations.

EXTENSION: Animal Movements to Music

MATERIALS

- tape or CD player
- musical recording of “Going to the Zoo”

PROCEDURE

Sing the story first so that children are familiar with the music and the words. Then play a musical recording of the song and have the children act out the different animal movements as given in the text. Children can sing the refrain and make appropriate motions by clapping on the first and last line of the refrain, pointing to other children on the second line, and motioning to “come along” on the third line. Two of our favorite recordings of this piece are by the song’s creator, Paxton, on *The Marvelous Toy* and the version by Peter, Paul, and Mary on the album titled *Peter, Paul, and Mommy*. This activity is an example of pantomime.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Neither recording listed above follows the text exactly. The librarian or teacher must play the tape before presenting the book to see which pages are different. We paper clip the pages together for the verses in the text that are not on the recording so that the story flows with the music. The *Peter, Paul, and Mommy* recording actually follows the book more closely than the recording by the author.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS

Talk about the different animals you see at the zoo and discuss their habits, how they move, and what they eat. Fasten a large piece of mural paper or Kraft (wrapping) paper to the wall and have the children use markers to draw different zoo
animals as a backdrop for their performance. Then, hold a zoo party and serve peanuts (elephant), bananas (monkey), and goldfish crackers (seals).

Goldilocks and the Three Bears
Valeri Gorbachev
(North-South)

The traditional fairy tale is accompanied by child-appealing illustrations and modern-day details such as large gold hoop earrings worn by Mama Bear, flip-flops worn by Dad, and pink tennis shoes worn by Baby Bear. Goldilocks is portrayed as a small, innocent child who simply stumbled upon the homey cottage.

EXTENSION: Pantomime

MATERIALS
none

PROCEDURE
First, share the traditional story of the three bears. Then, put the book down, and have the children pantomime the actions of the lead character, Goldilocks. Tell the children what Goldilocks does, but do not have them speak; rather, they should just act out the story. Goldilocks peeks through the window, opens the door and goes inside, smells the porridge, and tastes all three bowls, making appropriate facial and body expressions to indicate the porridge temperature. Then, as Goldilocks, they should try all three chairs and all three beds, again making appropriate movements to coincide with details of the story. At the end, Goldilocks jumps out the window and runs away through the forest.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Watch for the children’s actions as you retell the story to see what they devise. Some of their actions may be exaggerated, which adds to the fun of the pantomime. They may hold their hands above their brows to shield their eyes as they peer through the window, sniff deeply for the smell of the porridge, shiver violently for the cold porridge, and fan their tongues vigorously for the hot.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION
This book lends itself well to the math concepts of number, size, and one-to-one correspondence. Provide props of large, medium-sized, and small bowls, spoons, chairs, and bed coverings for the children to compare and sort into the order given in the story. Reread the story and have the children use these props appropriately. Use a deep, normal, or high voice for each of the bears, and encourage the children to join in with you.

Goldilocks and the Three Hares
Heidi Petach
(Putnam)

A twisted variant of the traditional classic folktale, this version features hares instead of bears. A play-within-a-play with mice as the commentators adds to the fun. Equally humorous balloon dialogues accompany the hilariously detailed illustrations of the elaborate hare’s hole in the ground.

EXTENSION: Reader’s Theater

MATERIALS
typed scripts
highlighter
colored file folders (optional)

PROCEDURE
The text of this book can easily be made into reader’s theater scripts for children to perform by deleting the dialogue in the borders for the mice, moles, and weasels. Without those sections, the storyteller has a wonderful twisted version of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. First, type the text of the script into a reader’s theater format (like a play script with the character name and colon followed by the spoken parts). All the text that is not written in a speech balloon is added to the narrator’s
part. Then, type the spoken parts (speech balloons) for each remaining character: Father, Mother, Baby, Goldie, and Police. After typing one script, print six copies (one master copy and six performer scripts). Then hand label each script with its character’s name. Go through each script to highlight that character’s name so that the child will quickly see her or his speaking parts. Staple each script inside a file folder for a more professional appearance. Drama experiences include both reader’s theater and making a play from a story.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Share the book before doing the reader’s theater version so that children are acquainted with the story. Also, children can then see the additional activity and dialogue by the moles, mice, and weasels and references to the author and illustrator that are not part of the scripted play.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION

Children of all ages enjoy the “Three Bears Rap” or “Three Bears Chant.” Our favorite recording of this can be found on *Music Mania*, by Stephanie K. Burton. This chant-rap is perfect for the musical concept of keeping the beat. Young children can clap their hands or tap their thighs to the beat, and older children, with developed fine-motor abilities, can snap their fingers to the beat. On this recording, the performer makes a jazzy hissing sound that children will enjoy imitating.

*The Hat*
Jan Brett
(Putnam)

Lisa hangs her woolen clothes on the clothesline outside to air them, but one stocking falls off the line. A curious hedgehog gets the stocking stuck on his prickles, and all the other animals laugh at him. Hedgie leads them to believe that a hat is the thing, and they all run off to get their own hats. Meanwhile, Lisa is shown in borders on each page getting ready for winter until she realizes her stocking is missing and reenters the story looking for it. Author-illustrator Brett traveled to Denmark to make her glorious paintings so that they would accurately portray a Scandinavian farm.

EXTENSION: Storytelling with Props

MATERIALS
- an assortment of hats or articles of winter clothing

PROCEDURE

Share the story first so that children understand the plot and the fact that Hedgie mistakenly got a wool sock stuck on his head. Next, for the extension, have children retell the story with an adult reading most of the story except for the animals’ questions and Hedgie’s responses. For ease of memorization, have each child portraying an animal ask the same question, “What’s that on your head, Hedgie? You look funny!” or a variation of this question. For Hedgie’s spoken responses, have cards typed up with the different responses given in the book. If they are placed in order as given in the book, the child playing Hedgie can just turn the cards over and respond in order. Then, a child playing Lisa can say her two lines about how ridiculous Hedgie looks. Near the end of the story, all the children portraying animals can reappear with their hats or winter clothing articles on their heads while Hedgie responds with the last line of the story. Drama experiences include storytelling with props and making a play from a story.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Point out to the children during the first reading that the illustrations that surround the text as a border tell their own story. They show Lisa preparing for winter as her clothes disappear from the clothesline. Children can then predict what will happen next in the story by seeing an animal on the right-hand border of one page that will then reappear on the following page.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION

Share Brett’s book *The Mitten* for another animal story that takes place in the winter and has exciting
and predictive action in the borders. Prepare a large laminated paper mitten “envelope” and paper animals from the story. Assign two children to hold the top edges of this mitten, and distribute the characters to other children. As the story is reread, children take turns dropping the various-sized characters into the large mitten until it is filled and “bursts” open at the end. If you have access to someone who works with yarn, procure a knitted or crocheted white mitten (fashioned with large needles or a thick hook) that will stretch. For a wealth of ideas on using all of Brett’s books, including patterns for the paper animals for *The Mitten* and animal masks and a script for *The Hat* and much more, see her web site, <http://www.janbrett.com>.

**Hattie and the Fox**

Mem Fox; illustrated by Patricia Mullins  
(Simon & Schuster)

Hattie sees first a nose, then eyes, then ears, then a body, then legs, and finally a tail in the bushes and finally figures out it is a fox. The other animals react nonchalantly until Hattie shouts out, “It’s a fox!” The cow’s loud “moo” fortunately scares the fox away. Mixed-media illustrations accompany this very simple tale.

**EXTENSION: Choral Reading**

**MATERIALS**

cue cards

**PROCEDURE**

Prepare cue cards for each animal (goose, pig, sheep, horse, cow) except for Hattie, the hen, and the fox. The narrator can be Hattie and read her lines along with extraneous text. The fox has a nonspeaking part and needs only to “jump out” of the “bushes” at the appropriate place in the text. Cue cards can be made by an adult for the other animals in the story, writing the two phrases each animal says in the text on the individual cue cards. The first phrase each animal says is repeated five times. Tell children they will repeat the last phrase only once, after Hattie says she sees a fox. If you have a large group of children, several can be geese, pigs, sheep, horses, and cows and read their lines together. Drama experiences used are choral reading and line-around choral speaking.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

For younger children, teach them their repeating line and then allow them to improvise their own reaction to the news, “It’s a fox!”

**ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS**

In addition to being an excellent story to use as a choral reading, this can also be acted out as a puppet play, because the lines would be easy to memorize. For simple costuming ideas, consult the puppet-making books in “Drama Resource Books” at the end of the chapter for ideas about making character puppets for each animal involved in the story. Suggestions are stick puppets or paper-bag puppets. Another story to share at the same time as this one with a similar theme is *Henny Penny*, by Jane Wattenberg. This story can also be performed easily.

**The Little Red Hen**

Paul Galdone  
(Clarion)

A classic version of the traditional tale of the little red hen who ends up doing all the housework while her housemates the mouse, cat, and dog all nap. Galdone has placed his characters in an abandoned farmhouse and used rustic colors and lighthearted characterizations to delight young children.

**EXTENSION: Body Bag Puppets**

**MATERIALS**

large grocery bags  
various colors of poster board  
stapler or hot glue gun  
wiggly eyes
chenille stems
grosgrain ribbon
feathers
cat and dog collars (optional)

PROCEDURE
This story is fun to act out with body bag puppets as shown in figure 3.2. To make these, use large paper grocery bags for each character (the little red hen, the mouse, the cat, and the dog). Staple or hot glue appropriate poster board colors (red for the hen, etc.) to a closed grocery bag turned upside down. One piece of poster board will be attached to the flap and the other piece beneath the flap of the bag (as in a paper bag puppet). Have children glue on chenille whiskers, wiggly eyes, feathers for the hen, and real cat and dog collars (or make those out of poster board), and add other details as desired. Finally, fasten grosgrain ribbon to the top center of the back of the puppet so that the body bag can be tied around a child’s neck. The bag is never opened; rather, it lies flat against the child’s body, and the character puppet is actually hanging from the child’s neck.

To act out the story, the reader plays the part of the little red hen and holds the book with one hand while reading the story and acting out the movements with the other hand while also reading the narrator parts. Children are told ahead of

Note: These are paper grocery bags (closed and upside down).

FIGURE 3.2 Puppets for The Little Red Hen
time that they will be prompted for their lines. For example, the narrator will say, “The mouse said . . .” and will then pause each time while the child assuming the role of the mouse responds, “Not I.” All of the characters respond this way every time except when the narrator asks, “Who will eat this cake?” at which time their response is an enthusiastic, “I will!” Children can also add movements according to the narration. Drama experiences for this book include making puppets and acting with puppets.

RECOMMENDATION

It is not always possible to get large grocery bags at stores. If you have difficulty finding them, check with a restaurant supply house or order them from craft catalogs.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS

Once children are familiar with the original tale, share two twisted versions that are a lot of fun. Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel have written a tale titled Cook-a-Doodle-Doo! and Philémon Sturges has another variant with his story The Little Red Hen (Makes a Pizza). For a flannel board version of The Little Red Hen, consult Judy Sierra’s The Flannel Board Storytelling Book (listed under “Drama Resource Books” at the end of this chapter).

Master Man
Aaron Shepard; illustrated by David Wisniewski (HarperCollins)

Shadusa believes he is the strongest man in the world and tells his wife Shettu to call him Master Man. Shettu warns him not to boast, saying there will always be someone stronger, and, sure enough, there is not one but two other Master Men. It is these two men fighting to see who is the strongest that creates thunder, according to this Nigerian tale. Caldecott-winning illustrator Wisniewski adds elaborate cut-paper illustrations in a comic-book format.

EXTENSION: Reader’s Theater

MATERIALS
scripts

PROCEDURE
The author of this book has reader’s theater scripts of the story at his web site, <http://www.aaronshep.com/rt/RTE27.html>. Print the scripts for the performance and assign parts. While performing, children can also pantomime the actions, particularly if the scripts are on music stands (as suggested above). Have the child who plays the role of the baby sit on the floor.

RECOMMENDATIONS
If you have access to Body Sox (a very stretchy, translucent pillowcase-like sack that closes over the entire body), the two children playing the roles of the two largest Master Men can each wear one. (You can order Body Sox from the Music in Motion catalog, mentioned in chapter 4.) Download and print the character posters from the web site, <http://www.aaronshep.com/extras/index.html#MasterMan>, and fasten each of the Master Men’s heads to an empty cardboard roll from gift wrap. Have the children hold them in place.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS
This tall tale is from Nigeria, and you may want to share other tall tales. Two of our favorites about other larger-than-life characters are The Bunyans, by Audrey Wood, and Sally Ann Thunder Ann Whirlwind Crockett, by Steven Kellogg. These tales, like Master Man, explain the origin of natural phenomena.

Piggie Pie!
Margie Palatini; illustrated by Howard Fine (Clarion)

Gritch the Witch decides she wants to make piggie pie to eat but is frustrated to realize that she is missing the most important ingredient—pigs! Flying on her broom to Old MacDonald’s
farm, she soon discovers there are no pigs to be found. Unbeknownst to her, the pigs all donned animal costumes. Palatini incorporates verses of the song “Old MacDonald” to add more “oomph” to this highly amusing tale, which is accompanied by illustrations rendered in pastels.

EXTENSION: Participation Story

MATERIALS
- pink poster board
- yellow poster board
- colored marker

PROCEDURE
Make two pink poster board signs. On the first write in large letters the words “Piggie Pie.” Turn it over and write “No Piggies” on the other side. On the second piece of poster board write “No Problem,” and flip it over to write “Problem” on the opposite side. On the yellow piece of poster board write “Old MacDonald’s Farm; Call Ei-Ei-O; Just over the River and through the Woods; We Have Ducks, Chickens, and PIGGIES!” as given in the illustration of the “Yellow Pages” found in the book. Then, the storyteller relates the story and holds up the correct sign for the children to say the lines, pausing to let them complete the phrase. This is an excellent way for children to get involved in the storytelling with participation as a drama experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS
This is a perfect story to share with a large group of children. If they cannot see the book, the storyteller can lay it on a table and tell the story, leaving both hands free to hold up the signs. When telling the story, you will need to describe the double-page spread when the pigs are donning their costumes because the story has no text for this part. Also, if telling the story and not holding up the book, explain within the story that when Gritch shouts to an animal, the animal is actually a pig in an animal costume. We normally whisper that unwritten part to build suspense and because it is to be kept secret from Gritch. For example, when Gritch shouts to a duck, whisper, “Who was really a pig in a duck costume!” Make sure you practice the story before presenting it so that you know when to hold up the signs. We always sing the part in the story that correlates to the “Old MacDonald” song.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS
When Gritch meets the wolf, he states that he has been chasing “three little pigs for days.” Ask the children what story this refers to. Then, share the story of The Three Little Pigs (see Barry Moser’s version below), or share the song “Who’s Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?” on the recording Four Baby Bumblebees, and have children sing along with the familiar refrain.

Pigs in the Mud in the Middle of the Road
Lynn Plourde; illustrated by John Schoenherr (Blue Sky)

Because of heavy rains, a Model T Ford gets stopped in the road by some pigs playing in the mud. Grandma shouts to the other occupants in the car about the obstacle, and Brother tries to shoo them away, to no avail. Other animals join the muddy mess while more family members try to chase them away. Grandma finally clears the scene, though she, too, ends up in the mud. Earth colors predominate in the line drawings of the farm animals and family.

EXTENSION: Choral Speaking

MATERIALS
- none

PROCEDURE
Teach the children the refrain “Oh no. Won’t do. Gotta shoo. But who?” which repeats five times. They may have difficulty remembering the words the first time, but show children that by adding motions to the phrases, it becomes easier to remember the words. For example, for “Oh no,” they can lightly hit the palm of one hand along the side of their head. For “Won’t do,” they can
waggle an index finger back and forth. “Gotta shoo” may be performed by moving their hands in a modified breaststroke motion. For “But who?” arms may be outstretched with palms facing upward. This allows for the drama experience of choral speaking in unison.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For Grandma’s lines, the storyteller should use a loud voice or make a calling-out motion by placing both hands alongside of her mouth and shouting out the lines. Also, discuss what the word rud means. In a New England dialect, the word road is pronounced “rud.”

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION

Share another book about animals that love mud puddles, in this case pigs, in the story The Piggy in the Puddle, by Charlotte Pomerantz. This story also contains silly rhyming words and is fun to share.

The Three Billy Goats Gruff
Paul Galdone
(Clarion)

Another of author-illustrator Galdone’s renditions of classic animal nursery tales, this one has particularly large, bold double-spread pages, which makes it an excellent choice for group story time. Particularly effective are the pages depicting the largest Billy Goat Gruff crossing the bridge; he literally leaps out at the reader. Though this is an older book, it still remains a superior choice for this traditional tale.

EXTENSION: Acting Out a Story with Puppets and Music

MATERIALS
- small white paper bag
- medium-sized paper bag
- two large grocery bags
- poster board
- crepe or tissue paper
- yarn or string
- colored markers
- grosgrain ribbon
- stapler
- tape or CD player
- musical recording of “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”

PROCEDURE

Children will use puppets for the goats and troll and act out the story from the book or to the song “The Three Billy Goats Gruff” by Greg and Steve on their recording Greg and Steve Rockin’ Down the Road. Encourage children to join in the refrain, “Trip, Trap, Trip, Trap, Trip, Trap.” As shown in figure 3.3, use a small white paper bag for the small billy goat, and a medium-sized paper bag for the middle billy goat. (A deli may have these two different sizes.) For the large billy goat and the troll, use large grocery bags. For all three goat puppets add poster board ears and use colored markers for facial features. Snip crepe or tissue paper to make a “goatee” on each. For the troll, add string or yarn hair, and use strips of crepe or tissue paper for the fur. Then, either cut out eye-holes for children to wear the larger grocery bags as head coverings or follow the directions under Paul Galdone’s Little Red Hen above and attach grosgrain ribbon. Drama experiences include storytelling with music, making puppets, and creative drama.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The children will most likely be happy to help make the goat masks. Have them step on poster board with the arches of their feet along the edge and trace around their heels. Cut out the resulting half ovals to use as goat ears. If you have access to a wooden classroom boat that could be flipped over to form a bridge, use the bottoms of the seats and floorboards as steps and the curved part as the arch of the bridge.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSION

The story can also be presented as a panel theater production. (See figure 3.4.) Directions for making
a panel theater are in Connie Champlin’s book, *Storytelling with Puppets*, listed in “Drama Resource Books” at the end of this chapter. The storyteller may make the theater ahead of time, or the children may help with this project as time permits. Attach three rectangles of blue poster board together with tape along their shorter sides to form a panel with three parts. This will serve as both the background of sky as well the water under the bridge. Add cut green paper as grass to the left and right side panels, with the grass on the left panel short and sparse and that on the hill of the right panel longer and lush. Draw a bridge shape that spans the middle panel and an
optional sun in the sky for the right panel. Staple a narrow strip of poster board along the bottom of the entire panel so poster board cutouts of each character may be inserted into it and moved across the panels to show the actions of the story. Also add a paper strip to the bridge to move the goats across it. Place the three goats into the strip on the left panel and the troll on the middle panel to begin the story. By the end of the story, the three goats will have crossed over the bridge to the right side, and the troll will be gone.

**The Three Little Pigs**
Barry Moser
(Little, Brown)

Moser relates the classic tale of the three little pigs that set off in the world to seek their fortune and build their own houses, but the details in the watercolor illustrations are particularly modern and somewhat irreverent, though very humorous for older children. The wolf, who has just dined on pig, wipes his chin next to a bucket of bones and a roll of paper towels. The third little pig eats wolf stew for supper and wears wolf-head slippers. Observant children will note that the label on Bubba's No Cook BBQ Sauce displays the face of the author-illustrator, as shown on the back flap of the book.

**EXTENSION: Storytelling with Props and Music**

**MATERIALS**
- yellow poster board
- brown poster board
- red poster board
- colored markers
- wolf puppet or mask (optional)
- tape or CD player
- musical recording of “The Three Little Pigs Blues”

**PROCEDURE**

The storyteller prepares three houses that the children will use to act out the story from the book or to the song “The Three Little Pigs Blues” by Greg and Steve on their recording *Greg and Steve Playing Favorites*. To make the houses, cut a window and round the top edges of the yellow straw house; add marker lines (V and W shaped) to suggest a straw appearance. Similarly, cut a window from the brown stick house, trim the top corners to make a slanted roof, and draw wiggly horizontal lines and branches to suggest twigs. Finally, for the red brick house, trim the top corners to make a slanted roof, and cut a window and attach it to the roof area to make a chimney. Draw alternating rows of rectangles to suggest bricks. (See figure 3.5.) Children will hold the houses up to their bodies as they peer through the windows.
wearing pink construction paper pig noses attached with masking tape or string. Another child can play the part of the wolf and use a wolf hand puppet or wear a poster board mask. Drama experiences include storytelling with props, telling stories through movement, and creative dramatics.

RECOMMENDATIONS
If using the Greg and Steve song, we divide the children who are not acting out a role into two groups. One group of children sings the wolf’s line “Little pig, little pig, let me come in,” and the other group sings the pigs’ line “Not by the hair on my chinny chin chin.” Then both groups sing together: “So he huffed and he puffed . . .” This would include antiphonal choral speaking as an additional drama experience.

ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS
Share other versions of the traditional tale and see which rendition children like best. Some variants have been illustrated by Glen Rounds, James Marshall, Steven Kellogg, and Bruce Whatley (see “Bibliography of Picture Books Used in Drama Extensions”). For a larger-than-life telling of The Three Little Pigs, enlarge the patterns that are depicted in Sierra's Flannel Board Storytelling Book (listed in “Drama Resource Books” at the end of this chapter). Then attach magnetic strips to the back of each piece, and, while telling the story, hang them to a blackboard, metal file cabinet, or a wall that has been painted with magnetic paint. To order magnetic paint, check Kling Magnetics: phone 800-523-9640 or e-mail info@kling.com.

Today Is Monday
Eric Carle
(Philomel)

Children can learn the days of the week while singing this popular children’s song about the different food items to eat each day. Carle has chosen to depict animals eating the food, though at the end of the book, we see hungry children devouring the feast, and the animals are now just pictures hanging on the walls. This is one of the first times an illustrator depicted a child in a wheelchair in a natural setting. Today Is Monday was
originally created as a frieze by author-illustrator Carle, who, in his picture books, makes his own paper and cuts and pastes it into a collage.

**EXTENSION: Choral Speaking**

**MATERIALS**

none

**PROCEDURE**

Divide the children into seven groups, one for each day of the week. Tell each group what day they are assigned and that they need to remember the name of the food for that particular day. Then, the storyteller reads the book, states the day of the week and pauses, with the group supplying the food name. This then becomes a cumulative choral speaking drama experience. Later, have the children sing it as a song. The music is presented in the back of Carle’s book.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Children must listen very carefully for their assigned day of the week, because the days of the week are presented in reverse order. We read it quickly so that they must really pay attention, and it is much more fun. As a scaffold for the children, paste magazine cutouts of each food on cue cards. Assign a child from each group to be responsible for holding up the card each time the food item is mentioned.

**ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS**

Have children write their own refrains by coming up with other foods for each day of the week and thus making a new song. Another excellent book to share for choral reading (where some children read together and then also separately) is *You Read to Me, I’ll Read to You*, by Mary Ann Hoberman.

**The Web Files**

Margie Palatini; illustrated by Richard Egielski (Hyperion)

Though the humor on this spoof of the former television show *Dragnet* will probably only be appreciated by adults, there is still more than enough clever wit to keep children chuckling. Ducktective Web (yes, he’s a duck) and his partner, Bill, are hot on the trail of the person who has pilfered a peck of perfect purple almost-pickled peppers. The characters they interrogate are all from nursery rhymes, though the culprit turns out to be a dirty rat. Best for sophisticated children with a droll sense of humor, Egielski’s illustrations are the perfect accompaniment—case closed.

**EXTENSION: Charades**

**MATERIALS**

none

**PROCEDURE**

The characters that the ducktectives interrogate are based on five nursery rhymes: “Little Miss Muffet,” “Little Bo Peep,” “Three Little Kittens,” “Little Boy Blue,” and “Little Jack Horner.” (Curiously, all the characters are little.) Before presenting the story, have some children pantomime the rhymes as charades, with the other children guessing the rhyme. Tell the children who are doing the charade that they can act it out and use motions but cannot speak, except to make animal sounds. Then, when all five rhymes have been identified, share the story. Children are using pantomime and charades as drama experiences.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Have all the children sing the “Dum-De-Dum-Dum” refrain as it appears often in the story. You will need to teach them the tune, as many will not know the TV show *Dragnet*.

**ADDITIONAL EXTENSION**

Share another funny, urbane tale with twisted nursery rhymes playing an important role in the story. *Humpty Dumpty Egg-Splodes*, by Kevin O’Malley, is riotously funny and would also be for older children or those who have sophisticated senses of humor.
**Yucka Drucka Droni**  
Vladimir Radunsky  
(Scholastic)

Variations of this classic tongue twister can be found in Yiddish, Russian, and Danish. One of our favorites involving three sisters is in a book, now out of print, called *It's Raining, Said John Twaining*, by N. M. Bodecker. In this version, three brothers, each with an increasingly more complicated name, marry three sisters, who also each have a more difficult name than the last. The abstract, bizarre art extends this brief rhyme and creates a visual oddity that is appealing.

**EXTENSION:** Tongue Twisters

**MATERIALS**

none

**PROCEDURE**

The storyteller instructs the children to repeat each character name after she reads it. The storyteller should dramatically pause and gesture to the children so that they know to say the name. When two names are involved, the storyteller states, for example, “Yucka-Druck to Zippa Drippa,” and children need to repeat that entire line. By the final marriage of the characters with the longest names, children will be faced with an extra-long tongue twister. Drama experiences include choral speaking in unison and storytelling with participation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The book does not give text for the final, most difficult tongue twister. We add it by stating, “Yucka-Drucka-Droni to Zippa-Drippa-Limpomponi!” We have children attempt to repeat that tongue twister, and then we read the following page: “Oh, yes! That’s right! Here comes the bride!”

**ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS**

Have children play with additional tongue twisters. They can also make up tongue twisters based on their own names. The storyteller can also share some tongue-twister books such as *Oh Say Can You Say?* by Dr. Seuss or *Busy Buzzing Bumblebees and Other Tongue Twisters*, by Alvin Schwartz.

**Bibliography of Picture Books Used in Drama Extensions**


**Bibliography of Musical Recordings and Videos**

*Used in Drama Extensions*


Wilson, Dean. *A Child at Heart: Songs for Children Ages 4–10.* (For ordering information, contact Dean Wilson, 466 Gardenwood Drive, Youngstown, OH 44512.)

**Drama Resource Books**

EXTENDING PICTURE BOOKS THROUGH DRAMA


