

# Little Red Hen

## Lesson Plan Sequence by Sharron L. McElmeel

Standard: Compare and contrast texts using themes, settings, characters and ideas.

Standard: Identify structural patterns found in narrative/informational text to strengthen comprehension, compare and contrast, discuss cause and effect, identify sequential or chronological order, and know about proposition and support.

Instructional Goals:

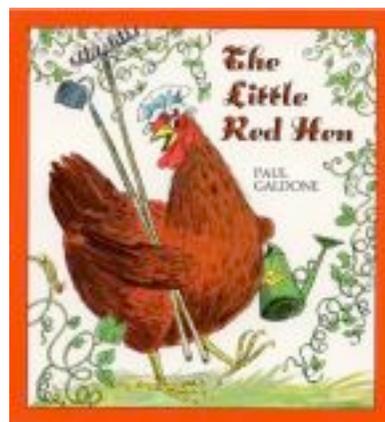
1. To introduce readers to the **story grammar** in the traditional tale, "The Little Red Hen."
2. Familiarize readers with the concept of story "characters."
3. Compare and contrast different versions of a traditional tale in order to build the concept of "variant retellings" and to build thinking skills.
4. Motive the writing of an innovation on the text.

Outcomes

1. Readers will understand what elements constitute a retelling of a tale using only the basic plot structure of the tale.
2. Readers will understand that changing details, such as specific characters, actions, and so forth does not necessarily change the basic plot or story line.
3. Readers will be able to write an innovation on the text by maintaining the basic story grammar and changing the details to create a variant tale.

Lesson Sessions:

- I. Read ***The Little Red Hen*** by Paul Galdone (Clarion, 1979)
  - A. Discuss the characters: hen, cat, dog, and mouse
  - B. Discuss the sequence of events including the statements: "Not I," and "I will."
  - C. Reread the story and invite audience participation in the responses.
  - D. Dramatize the tale with a modified readers' theater.



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II. Read *The Little Red Hen* by Linda McQueen (Scholastic, 1985)

- A. Discuss the characters:  
hen, goose, cat, and dog.
- B. Discuss the sequence of events including the statements: “Not I,” and “I will.”
- C. Reread the story and invite audience to compare the characters/story grammar in this version to the story grammar in the Galdone version.
- D. Make a chart of the story characters and their contribution/actions in the story.



III. Read “*The Little Red Hen*” by Joseph Jacobs in *Tomie DePaola’s Nursery Tales* (Putnam, 1986); page 16-20.



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- A. Continue the comparison by referring to the Galdone and McQueen versions
  - a. Discuss the characters:  
hen, pig, cat, and duck.
  - b. Discuss the sequence of events including the statements: “Not I,” and “I will.”
  - c. Note that the story grammar follows the same pattern.



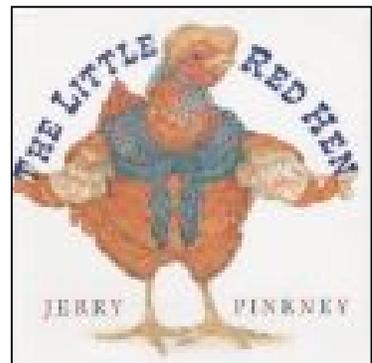
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- III. Read *The Little Red Hen: An Old Fable* by Heather Forest; illustrated by Susan Gaber (August House/Little Folk, 2006).
- A. Continue the comparison by referring to the Galdone, McQueen, and dePaola versions Little Red Hen
1. Discuss the characters: dog, cat, mouse.
  2. Discuss the sequence of events including the statements: "Not I," and "I will."
  3. Note that the story grammar follows the same pattern; and
  4. The Little Red Hen bakes a cake but when she is done she does let the dog, cat, and mouse help her eat the cake with the idea that in the future they will help bake the cake too -- even though as the illustrations show, the help will most likely be more work for the Little Red Hen.
- B. Summarize what we know about "The Little Red Hen."
- a. Hen and three characters (characters can be different)
  - b. Hen wants others to help plant, care for, harvest, and grind the wheat.
  - c. Others will not help.
  - d. Hen uses grain to bake cake/bread.
  - e. Others want to eat it.
  - f. Hen eats what she has baked, alone.

IV. Read *The Little Red Hen* by Jerry Pinkney (Dial, 2006)

- A. Compare the Pinkney version to the other versions.
- a. Characters: hen and **four** others: rat, goat, pig, dog.
  - b. Bakes bread as in other tales.
  - c. Revise the summary of "The Little Red Hen" versions (see above)  
Hen and other characters (3 or 4 but could be 2 or 5 etc.)



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- d. Ask: Could the characters have made something else? Cookies? A pie?
- e. Ask: Would the main character always have to be a Little Red Hen?
- B. Create a poetry and prose connection with the prose versions of "The Little Red Hen" by reading "The Mouse, the Frog and the Little Red Hen," a poem written anonymously and shared in a collection ***A Book of a Thousand Poems*** with an introduction by J. M. MacBain (Peter Bedrick Books, 1983). The poem can also be found in ***Side by Side: Poems to Read Together*** collected by Lee Bennett Hopkins, with illustrations by Hilary Knight (Simon & Schuster, 1988). Online at [www.mcelmeel.com/curriculum/poemLRH.html](http://www.mcelmeel.com/curriculum/poemLRH.html).
- V. Read: ***Little Green Witch*** by Barbara Barbieri McGrath. Illustrated by Martha G. Alexander. (Charlesbridge, 2005) and discuss story grammar in relation to the previously read "Little Red Hen" stories.
- VI. Create an innovation on the "Little Red Hen" story.
  - A. Decide on the characters.
  - B. Decide what the character will make. (pizza, applesauce, cookies)
  - C. Make a list of 4-5 actions the character must take: find walnuts, crack open the walnuts, chop up the nut meats, mix up the cookie batter, put in the nuts, and bake the cookies. Sequence the actions.
  - D. Print the collaboratively written story. Make it into a booklet for children to illustrate. Each child could draw a portion (black and white drawing). Duplicate so each child has a copy of the story. Publish a book for each reader to read and colorize the black and white drawings.

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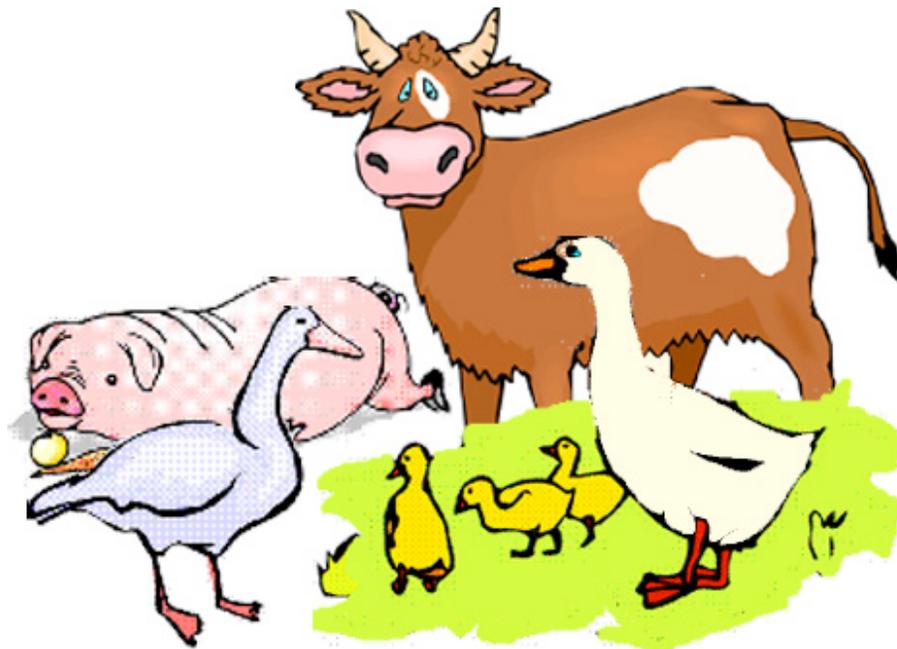
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Example of innovation:

Characters: Duck, Goose, Cow, Pig

Story sequence of actions:

1. Duck finds an apple grove and asks for help picking apples.
2. Duck picks a basket of apples herself.
3. Duck asks for help peeling and slicing the apples.
4. Duck peels and slices the apples herself.
5. Duck asks for help cooking the apples.
6. Duck puts the apple slices in the pan and cooks them herself.
7. Apples cook and Duck mashes them down.
8. Duck adds cinnamon to the applesauce and the other animals smell the good smells and come to investigate.
9. Duck and her little ducklings eat the applesauce themselves.



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## Other Innovations to Read

Ketteman, Helen. *Armadilly Chili*. Illustrated by Will Terry. (Albert Whitman, 2004) Features Billie Armadilly who sets out to make her “hot armadilly chili.” Her friends—Tex the tarantula, Mackie the bluebird, and Taffy the horned toad—are too busy to help.

Fleming, Candance. *Gator Gumbo*. Illustrated by Sally Anne Lambert. (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004). When Poor Monsieur Gator wants to have some assistance in making gumbo his “friends” only make fun of his slow ways but eventually possum, otter, and skunk find their comeuppance in a way that unique to this version.

Stevens, Janet and Susan Crummel Stevens. *Cook-a-Doodle-Do!* (Harcourt, 1999). Big Brown Rooster discovers his grandmother’s cookbook – *The Joys of Cooking Alone* and, being tired of the same old bread, decides to try her recipe for strawberry shortcake. In this innovation, Rooster--rebuffed by Dog, Cat, and Goose just like his Granny was--finds companionship in the kitchen with Turtle, Iguana, and Potbellied Pig – three friends who are all too helpful.

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