

Curious George's First Day of School

Curious George Visits Your Home

Introduction

George is a curious monkey. He gets very bored on the weekends when all the children have gone home. So that George can satisfy his curiosity, each child may take him home for one weekend so that he has a chance to explore new places. When he comes back to school, each child will have a chance to share his adventures!

Materials Needed

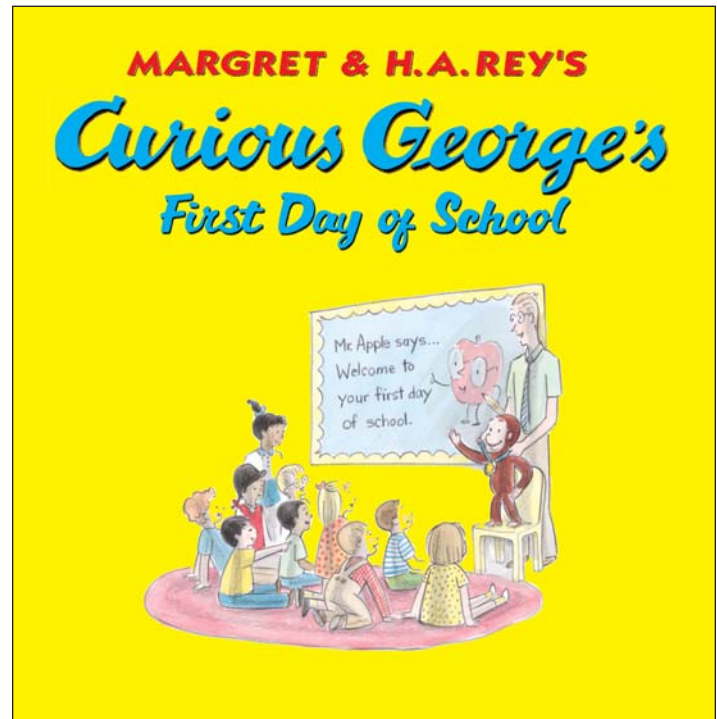
- Curious George plush toy
- Notebook or composition book to serve as a journal
- Bag to carry Curious George and the journal back and forth
- Class list posted in the classroom showing when each child's weekend with George will take place
- Letter to families explaining the project

Background Knowledge

Children should have been exposed to Curious George through class read-alouds and through independently examining Curious George books you may have in your classroom library. They should be aware that your class has a plush Curious George figure and should have had some opportunities to play with it during choice times or recess. Because sharing George's adventures will create a forum through which children tell each other about their homes and families as well, this activity fits nicely within a social studies "All About Me" or "My Family and Me" unit. You will want to send a letter home to families before you begin this project so that they are prepared.

Teaching

You may introduce this activity by explaining that George will be spending one weekend with each child so that he can have some adventures on the weekend instead of staying in the empty classroom. Tell your students that George will be traveling back and forth with his own journal so that each child and his/her family can write or draw about what they do together. Families may even choose to include photographs. You will want to have the journal on hand to show the children what you mean. You may even want to have started the journal off by writing/drawing about what George did when visiting *your* house, as a model for children. Also, show the children the class list you've created that details the order of children's weekends with George. Post this in the room so that they can check in with it.



Share

On each Monday morning when George returns to the classroom, the child who spent the weekend with him can read/show the journal to the class and explain what they did together. You may want to allow the child to choose two children to ask questions about the weekend. At the end of the year, you will have a journal full of George's adventures to keep in your classroom library!

Curious George Hides Letters!

Introduction

When the children go home at night, after the teacher has finished writing the "morning message" on the board, George decides to play a little trick on the kids. He "steals" some of the letters from familiar words in the message so that the children have to figure out what is missing when they come back to school in the morning. This can go on for many weeks, focusing first on different letters and later on familiar sight words.

Materials Needed

- A white board, a chalkboard, or chart paper
- The appropriate writing tool
- An alphabet chart posted in the room, visible to your students during meeting time

Background Knowledge

Children should have been exposed to the morning meeting routine of reading together a brief “morning message” of predictable text (for example, “*Good Morning. Today is Monday. Today we will have art.*”) from a white board, a chalkboard, or chart paper. They should have been working on “reading” the message along with you, with your support and with the support of other children’s voices. They should be beginning to recognize the boundaries of words and should understand that words are made up of letters. It is helpful if (but not necessary that) children have some experience naming the letters of the alphabet and understanding what sounds they make, but the activities support children at all levels of letter-sound understanding.

Teaching

One morning when you call your children to your morning meeting place, tell them that something has happened to your morning message. Curious George has played a trick on the kids and has stolen a letter from some of the words! You will want to start with a consonant letter that you think many children are familiar with—for example, you may write the morning message without the initial T’s so that it reads, “*Good Morning. _oday is Monday. _oday we will have art.*” Try to read the message without the T’s so that it sounds silly. Ask children to turn and talk to each other about what letter they think might be missing, and why. Call on one child to come up and fill in the missing T’s, and then read the message together as a class so that it sounds right. You may want to create a list or chart so that each child has a chance to come up and add in the missing letter at some point in the year.

Possible Progression of Lessons

You will want to start this activity by taking away one beginning consonant sound. As your students progress, you can proceed in a variety of ways. You may take away several different consonants, or take away middle or end sounds. When you begin studying vowels, you can take away vowels. As your children study and learn to recognize simple sight words, you can have George hide these entire words as opposed to simply hiding letters. You can manipulate the phrasing of your morning messages to provide opportunities for your students to focus on a variety of letters, sounds, and sight words.

Curious George Wants to Know Who Works in the School

Introduction

George is so curious! He sees lots of different grownups throughout the school day, and he isn’t sure what all of them are doing. He knows a few things about the classroom teacher, but he’d like to know more about people with other jobs also. Your class will learn about these jobs together.

Materials Needed

- Chart paper and writing materials
- Paper, pencils, and clipboards for interviews
- Writing/drawing paper and supplies

Background Knowledge

This activity works well within the context of an ongoing social studies “school study,” but it can certainly be presented independently. Children should have had opportunities to see other parts of the school and to interact with the people who work there—for example, the cafeteria and cafeteria workers, the library and the librarian, the custodial office and the custodians, the principal’s office and the principal. It may be helpful for children to understand the concept of finding out information through interviews, but you can provide support along the way if this is their first experience with interviews.

Teaching

First make a list with your students on chart paper of all the jobs people can have in a school. Tell your students that, like they are, George is curious about what all of these adults do during the day. Using this list, have children think up some questions they’d like to ask these people. Collect a list together on chart paper of five to ten questions, and then vote as a class on which three questions they like the best. Because children are new to interviewing, it is best to keep the questions simple and consistent for each person interviewed—for example, “What is your favorite part of your job?” or “What is the hardest part of your job?” When you have decided on three questions, tell your students that you will be making interview papers for them so that they can actually go to these people, ask them questions, and record what they say.

Activity

At a later date, when you have had time to prepare papers for the children listing the questions you have decided on together (and to organize appropriate interview times for the interviewees), organize your students into small groups, with each group assigned to a school worker. During choice time or center time, bring small groups of students to interview each worker in the place they are most likely to be found (the gym teacher in the gym, etc.). If you do not have help either to bring small groups of children to their interviews or to stay with the rest of the class while you do this, you may choose to invite the interviewees to come to your room and do the interviews as a whole class.

Share

Write up the results of the interviews in a chart that can be displayed in the classroom. Children may also want to draw portraits (or take photographs) of the people they have interviewed.

Curious George Gets Lost—We Need to Make a Map!

Introduction

Curious George likes to wander around the school and explore new places. Sometimes, though, he has a hard time finding his way back to the classroom! After taking several tours of the school with your class, have them make a block map of the school so that George won't get lost.

Materials Needed

- Building blocks
- Chart paper and writing materials
- Large rug or floor area where blocks can be left up for several days
- Camera to photograph map (optional)
- Children's books about maps

Background Knowledge

This lesson can be carried out as part of a social studies school study unit, or it can be presented on its own. Your students should have gone on several exploratory tours of your school so that they are familiar with their surroundings and the school's layout. You will also want to have read some children's books that explore mapmaking.

Teaching

Tell your students that you will be making a map of your school together. If your school has more than one story, you will probably want to stick to mapping one level to start. Discuss with your students the important parts of the school that they want to include on a map. List these places on chart paper. Sit in a circle at the edge of your mapping area with the blocks easily accessible. You may want to have already built the outside edges of the school map. You may choose to start with your classroom and place blocks within the perimeter of the school that represent the outside edges of your room. After your room is in place, use it as a reference point as you add other places to your map. Have different child volunteers come to the center and place the blocks down. When you are helping children figure out where things go on your map, make sure to help them make the connection between where in relation to their actual room someplace is and where in relation to their room on the map something is.

Follow Up

You may want to photograph and display this map in your classroom if it is impossible to leave it up for a while. As children become more familiar with the concepts of mapping, you can have them begin to actually draw their own maps of the school.

Curious George Wants to Know About You: The "Me Museum"

Introduction

Curious George likes to know as much as he can about his new friends. Each child will be given a day on which he/she will bring objects from home to add to the class "Me Museum." Children will share their objects during morning meeting. The museum will be on display all day, and children will have an opportunity to look at it up close during choice time.

Materials Needed

- A large box (boxes for photocopier paper work great) decorated and labeled "Me Museum."
- Camera (optional)
- Letter to families explaining project, notifying parents of each child's Me Museum date and suggesting types of things children might bring in (see below)
- Class list hung for children to see when their Me Museum day will be

Background Knowledge

This activity works well when presented as part of a social studies unit focused on learning about each other, such as "All About Me." You will want to have provided a list of guidelines for families, explaining what kinds of objects each child might bring for the Me Museum. You might suggest, for example, that children bring in one thing they've made, one thing that reminds them of someplace they've visited, one thing someone gave to them, a baby picture, and so on.

Share Time

On each child's Me Museum day, he/she may put his/her things into the box you've provided as soon as he/she gets to school. During morning meeting time or another time that seems appropriate for your class, have the child sit in a special chair with the box nearby. The student will have a chance to briefly share each of the objects brought from home. At the end, the sharer may choose two or three students to ask questions or make comments about what the class has seen and learned about the sharer by looking at these objects. Later, during center time, you may choose to have the child share the museum less formally with small groups. This is best as a supervised activity, as children are often quite protective of things they've brought from home and you may need to provide some support with the sharing process.

Display

If you are able to take a photograph of the contents of each child's "Me Museum," you can create a wonderful bulletin board at the end of the Me Museum study by posting photographs and drawings and writings children have done about the objects they have brought to share.