

Read-Aloud Activity

Shiver Me Letters: A Pirate ABC

Written by June Sobel
Illustrated by Henry Cole



Reader Notes and Book Summary

- ✧ This alphabet book is delivered as a pirate adventure. The pirates already have “R’s,” but this captain and crew are in search of capturing every letter of the alphabet. Letters appear in unusual shapes and places that are fun for children to find in the illustrations. *Shiver Me Letters* is told in a fun rhyming rhythm that encourages children to join in.
- ✧ Read the book in advance to be prepared to emphasize particular words that rhyme. Notice the use of alliteration, explain new vocabulary, and know exactly where to encourage listeners to complete phrases with predictable words. While reading be sure to allow ample time for children to see the many details of these fun-filled illustrations.



Keeping Your Audience Connected With Books and Reading

Connecting

Connecting story events to kids’ own experiences helps them understand and relate personally to the characters and events in the story.

Listening

Help kids listen and join in with predictable words and phrases to actively engage them in the story.

Retelling

Retelling the sequence of story events strengthens comprehension.

Set Read-Aloud Stage

- ✧ Begin the session by asking children to share some things they know about pirates and lead the conversation towards typical things pirates say. What do children already know? Use your “pirate voice” to include talk about “pirate lingo” to prepare them for listening to the story. This will include things like “ARRR” (or “R”), references to words and phrases like “shiver me timbers,” “set sails,” “land ho,” “landlubber,” a “swashbuckling sword,” “walking the plank,” and “yo-ho-ho-ho.”

During Read-Aloud!

- ✧ Show the book’s cover and read the title. Give plenty of time for children to notice details and have them identify the story’s characters and describe what they think this story will be about.¹
- ✧ Use your “pirate voice” to make reading the story more fun and pause long enough with predictable or rhyming words to give children a chance to help complete sentences.² As you read, have children repeat some alliterative phrases or unfamiliar words to experience their “feel” when spoken aloud, such as crystal clear, a cannonball carved with a C; they dug for doubleloons; a mysterious map; swashbuckling sword; veiled in velvet; zillions of Z’s zoomed.³
- ✧ Take time to explain some new words, such as quest (purpose and adventure); anchor (a weight to hold the ship in one spot); crystal clear (see through or transparent); doubloons (old Spanish gold coins); paces (measured steps); ivory (white carved animal tusk); landlubber (someone who lacks experience at sea); nimble (agile); commotion (excitement); slothful (lazy); swashbuckling (belonging to a bully or person who boasts); planks (boards sticking out over the ship’s edge); plunder (rob).⁴

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(Continued)

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Read-Aloud Discussion and Wrap-Up

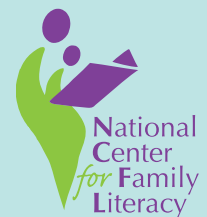
Take no more than five minutes to wrap up.

- ✧ Mention that when you use new words it helps if you tell what they mean within the context of the story so that children understand the words related to how they are used. This helps children learn and remember the meanings of new words. Does anyone remember any of the new words introduced with this book? (Quest, anchor, crystal clear, doubloons, paces, ivory, landlubber, nimble, commotion, slothful, swashbuckling, planks, and plunder.)
- ✧ Ask “What was the story about?” “What was the first letter found?” and other open-ended questions to help children think about the story and connect it to their own experiences.⁵ Encourage families to get this book and read it together at home where they will have time to look more closely at details in the pictures, play with the language, and enjoy the story all over again.
- ✧ Download and distribute the bookmarks and Tips to Support Beginning Readers to all parents.



Footnotes

- ¹ This helps build children’s interest and oral language promotes reading achievement.
- ² Involving children in the story promotes listening and oral language skills and hearing and using rhyme in words builds phonological awareness. Both engaging in oral language and developing phonological awareness promote reading achievement.
- ³ Phonological awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in words, promotes reading achievement. Armbruster, B.B., Lehr, F., and Osborn, J. (2001). *Put Reading First: The research building blocks for teaching children to read*. Washington, DC: The Partnership for Reading: National Institute for Literacy, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and U.S. Department of Education. Access this full document and the *Put Reading First Parent Guide* at http://www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading/publications/Parent_br.pdf.
- ⁴ Teaching new information in context makes it more meaningful and learning vocabulary promotes reading achievement.
- ⁵ Using open-ended and “wh” questions increases talk about the book and helps children focus on details. It supports comprehension and builds vocabulary, both important for promoting reading achievement. These questions also help children add new knowledge to what they already know.



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