

The Gigantic Turnip

A folktale from Russia

Recommended Key Stage: EYFS

Synopsis: A farmer grows a gigantic turnip, so big that he cannot pull it from the ground. One by one, he enlists the help of all the other animals in the farm, but even when they all pull together the turnip will not come out. Finally, a tiny mouse joins in and with his help, the gigantic turnip finally comes out of the ground.

This story is also extremely popular in Ukraine, Belarus and Poland

Part 1: Share the Story

Listen to the story The Giant Turnip told by Chris Smith.

Share the story back on the carpet. Encourage the class to join in with noises/actions for each farmyard animal, and with the repetition "Pull, Pull, Pull!"

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

Questions

- Did you enjoy the story? Why/not?
- Which was your favourite part? Why?
- Which part(s) didn't you like? Why?
- How did the farmer feel when he couldn't pull the turnip?
- How would each animal pull the turnip differently? Some might use their mouths, some might use their paws.
- How did the mouse feel when he pulled the turnip?
- Who is the hero of the story? Is it just the mouse?
- Will each animal eat the turnip the same way?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities
Story Walk Students stand in their own space around the room. They have each become the farmer in their own story worlds. Read out Resource A line by line. As you read, the students use the space to mime the story.
Freeze Frames Tell the story. Stop at different points and encourage the children to freeze showing the emotions of the character. E.g. It's time for the turnip harvest The turnip won't come out of the ground Even with a lot of characters pulling, the turnip still won't come out The turnip finally comes out and it is enormous!
Story Retelling - Sound and vision Break up students into pairs. Throughout this activity announce "switch!" so each student gets a turn In pairs, students try to retell the story using only facial expressions and actions, while the other student can translate these into the story One student can try and tell the story entirely in sounds and sound effects, while the other student has to narrate from this.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Freeze Frames Tell the story. Stop at different points and encourage the children to freeze showing the emotions of the character. • Focus on one of the characters – Farmer, sheep, mouse • Ask the children to freeze frame (working independently) when the farmer was pulling, when the farmer was disappointed– encourage the children to draw on both the ‘Step the Story’ activity to help them. • Repeat for the Mouse –throughout the story, even before they offer to help- happy/sad/surprised/angry • Try to introduce extra tangential character to the story. e.g. the sheep, the farmer’s wife. How do these characters feel at certain parts of the story. Invent new moments that aren’t in the original story (maybe the sheep feel sorry for the farmer? Maybe the farmer’s wife thinks he’s being silly? Maybe the cat doesn’t want the mouse to help) • Each time the children show, spend some time looking at each other’s choices as they may not have all chosen the same point in the story. Can the children explain their story section and why they’ve chosen it? • Introduce working in a small group - 4 at the most. • Each group chooses their favourite part of the story to freeze frame. Each child taking on a character and thinking about the feelings of that character. • Can the others in the class recognise the story section and/or feelings being shown? If someone in the group is being an animal, can the other children guess which one?	Plant some real seeds. Get some fast growing seeds (examples: mustard seeds, cress) and have the children plant them in class. Get some pots and some soil and bury the seeds. Water them carefully-not too much. Watch them grow and grow day by day-just like the giant turnip. Measure them with rulers and record how much they grow. Record how they change with words. Finally when they’re ready, you can try to pull them out-just like the giant turnip. If you want to, you can use your pot of mustard/pot of cress to retell the story of “Gigantic Turnip” Take some toy animals and change it to “The gigantic shrub/The gigantic cress” Encourage children to do this themselves with their own seeds Memory game Sit in a circle. Go round the class adding more animals to the story, all pulling the turnip. After you run out of farm animals, start adding animals from the zoo, or animals you might find in another country. Make sure each animal has their own unique sound and action for pulling the turnip. Create a full menagerie, with as many students as possible each coming up with a different animal pulling the turnip. Then go round and see who can remember the most animals all together in the chain. The noises and actions will help you remember. The rest of the class can help.

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Little Red Hen (America)

Sweet Porridge (Germany)

James and the Giant Peach (a book by Roald Dahl)

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs (a book by Judi and Ron Barrett)

EYFS Framework Links

As well as **Communication and Language** this story supports work on–

PSHE –

ELG: Self-Regulation

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Show an understanding of their own feelings and those of others and begin to regulate their behaviour accordingly.
- Set and work towards simple goals, being able to wait for what they want and control their immediate impulses when appropriate.
- Give focused attention to what the teacher says, responding appropriately even when engaged in activity, and show an ability to follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG: Managing Self

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge.

Learning Resources

The Gigantic Turnip

Resource A: Story Walk Prompt

You are the farmer, growing your vegetables.

First you dig a hole

Then you plant some carrot seeds.

Then you water them.

Watch them grow.

Water them some more.

Wait till they're ready

Finally it's time for harvest, you "pull, pull, pull Pop!" Carrots for dinner

Repeat with other vegetables. Again and again (take suggestions from the class)

Finally, you're going to plant a turnip!

Water it and wait.

Watch it grow, And grow, and grow.

Wait till it's ready.

Harvest time. Try to pull it (pull, pull, pull)

Now stop! It won't come out!

Ask the sheep for help. "Sheep! Pull my back"

Be a sheep pulling out a turnip

Try to pull it (pull, pull, baa!)

Now stop! It won't come out!

Repeat with other animals. Again and again (take suggestions from the class) Each time, be that animal (ideas: cow, dog, cat, chicken)

Each time you add another animal don't forget the animals that have come before

Make noises each time ("pull, pull, moo" "pull, pull, woof" "pull, pull, miaow). Do as many animals as you can think of. Create a chain

Finally stop. It won't come out. Dust your hands. Look disappointed.

Then be a little mouse and ask if you can help.

Don't forget to be ALL the other animals pulling, making their noises.

Last of all be the tiny mouse

POP, out it comes! Everyone (Carefully) fall down

All the animals share the gigantic turnip