

Nagaoka 3rd and 4th Grade English Classes

So far, only 5th and 6th grades have a textbook. We still sing songs and play games, but there are fewer songs in 4th grade and higher, because it is difficult to get older students to sing. We have many activities, and I try to make some activities similar to ones from 5th and 6th grades, so that they can get accustomed to the style.

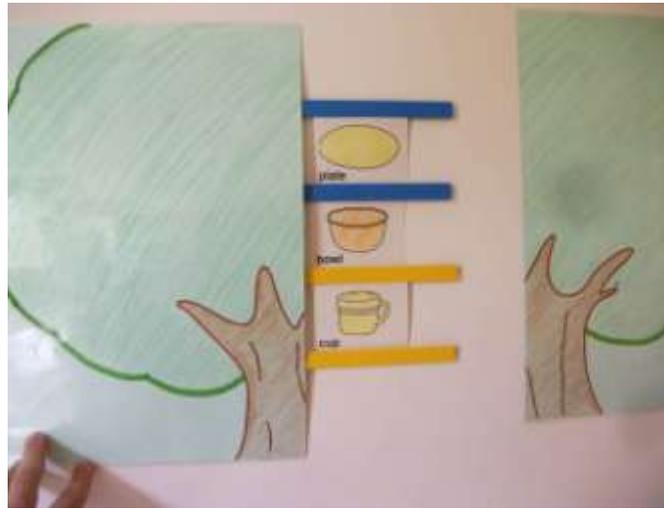


In this lesson, the students learn the words for different dishes, and I've also added colors to reinforce that vocabulary. The focus of this lesson is actually not about the dishes, but rather where some are in relation to others.



For example, in the activity, there are nine different dishes, using four different colors. First, we practice saying the names and colors of the dishes. Then, we practice saying where they are. This lesson takes more than one class period, because we raise the difficulty as we go.

On the second day, we cover the dishes, and the students try to remember where the dishes are.



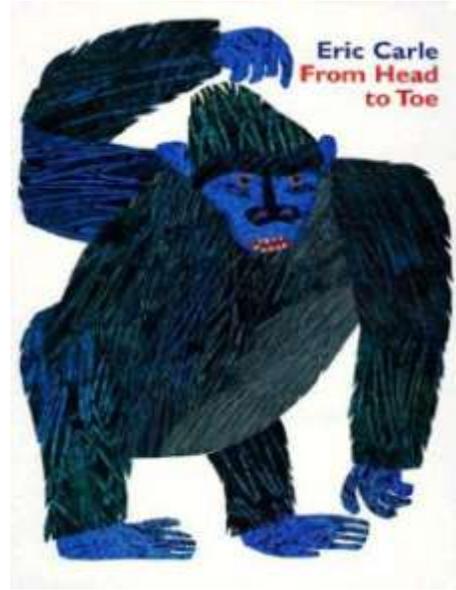
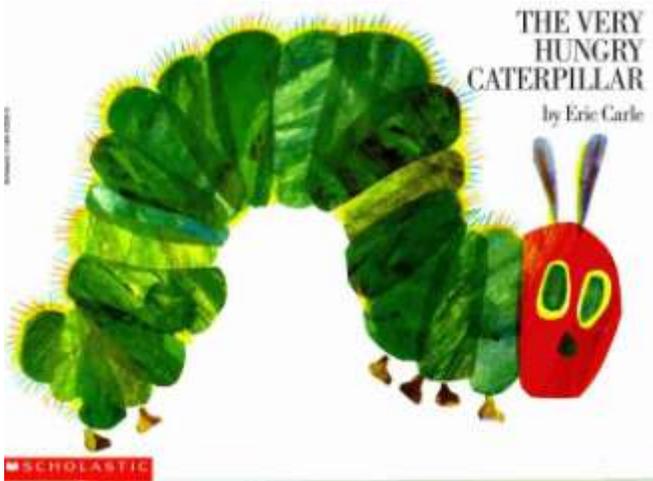
Of course, the students get first-hand experience, as they use the new vocabulary with each other. It's always great to have a homeroom teacher that's involved with the activities.



Even as high as fourth grade, I still like to use picture books. It's a great way to introduce new vocabulary, because in picture books it's always presented in context, and not just a bunch of flashcards. Picture books can be used for many things, and most have specific themes.

The Eric Carle books are the best series of books to be used in school, and my two favorites are "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" and "From Head to Toe." "Caterpillar" is a great way to use and practice colors and fruit, and also tells a story of a caterpillar changing into a butterfly. There's a similar book called "The Beautiful Butterfly," but I rarely use it in fourth grade. I always read it to third grade and lower.

I really enjoy "From Head to Toe," and it's the book that requires the most energy from myself and the students. In the book, we say the names of about a dozen animals, and each one has an action.



For the final animal, it is a flamingo, and it balances on one leg. By the time we are done with the book, everyone is sweating, especially me!