

About the Guide

This Winslow Press Teacher Guide has been designed to be of use to the classroom teacher by offering enrichment activities and discussion materials to complement *Hot-Cha-Cha!* These activities can help students to better understand and enjoy the story as well as assist teachers in implementing strategies and experiences that support their district's learning standards for language arts.

The Guide presents a story synopsis and outlines pre-reading activities. It also presents some concepts related to the story and includes: a brief discussion of related curriculum areas; a list of vocabulary words; class discussion questions; and independent study ideas related to *Hot-Cha-Cha!* The activities are designed to cover a range of language arts skills development that meets the needs of multiple learning styles. The final part of the Guide lists additional resources (books, museums, reference materials, related Internet Web sites) for both teachers and students.

The interdisciplinary activities were developed to support the New York State Learning Standards for English Language Arts. The Standards can be downloaded from the New York State Education Department's Web site at <http://www.nysed.gov/rscs/stds/contents.html>.

If you have questions about specific standards applied to these activities, please call Winslow Press at 800-617-3947.

We hope this Teacher Guide will be a useful and positive part of your teaching experience!

Sincerely,

Diane F. Kessenich
Chief Executive Officer and Publisher

Introduction

A narrative poem with an appealing rhythm, *Hot-Cha-Cha!* speaks to young readers in the language of children's games. Josephine Nobisso's book takes us on a rollicking ride through a city childhood through the beat and rhyme of playground chants.

The story begins when Maria finds a key inside a cookie jar that turns out to be the lost key to the community playground. Its discovery sends Maria and her friends on a rhyming adventure as they reclaim the space and its equipment. Soon enough, the children are joined by the local grown-ups, who are equally delighted to rediscover the playground.

Hot-Cha-Cha! answers the questions Who? What? Why? When? Where? and How? with both zany and practical possibilities.

Critical Thinking Questions

Knowledge: Can you name all the kinds of equipment usually found on a playground? Can you name some games or activities that children might enjoy that do not require playground equipment?

Comprehension: Which kinds of equipment might be dangerous for younger children? Many playgrounds do not have monkey bars anymore. Can you guess why? (Determine whether children know what monkey bars are.)

Application: Do you know what the word “pantomime” means? Pretend you are on the playground using a piece of equipment. Can others guess what you are using?

Analysis: If the people in a community want a new playground, what are some of the steps they will have to take? Can you put a playground anywhere? What is a good place for a playground in your community?

Synthesis: Can you improve a piece of equipment in your playground? Draw a picture or build a model of your new, improved design. What will you call this new and improved piece of equipment?

Evaluation: Why do you think a playground is so important to children who live in a city? Is it a good idea to lock a playground at certain times? Why or why not?

Related Concepts

Word Play and Rhythm/Patterns

Hot-Cha-Cha! makes good use of “nonsense” words. Nonsense words provide a sense of playfulness as well as offering latitude to the teacher and to students who aspire to write (or, for those too young to write, to tell a story). Rhyme and rhythm, both important elements in *Hot-Cha-Cha!*, are also devices for making fun out of language and are key parts of many children’s games.

People tend to remember rhymes more easily than they do other spoken or written forms, and rhythm can make the memorization of data an easier task. It is also an important element of physical play.

Jump-rope rhymes, which *Hot-Cha-Cha!* mimics in its rhythm and content, are a wonderful example of the ways in which verbal and physical patterns come together in a game. The ropes are held and turned to a specific rhythm or pattern, and the jumper jumps in a specific pattern. All players sing or chant a rhyme consistent with the jumping/turning pattern. Each rhythm may be different, but they all work together. This is part of the joy of the game. As students play a jump-rope game, talk about the ways these patterns work together. What happens if one of them is changed?

The discussion questions that follow focus on the concepts of nonsense words and rhythm as they relate to play.

To Read Aloud and/or Discuss

- What are nonsense words?
- Sometimes we just need to invent our own words, because no “real word” can express the thing we want to say. Do you use any words that you’ve made up on your own?
- Can you explain what a rhyme is?

Related Concepts

- Can you think of a tough word that you can't find a rhyming word for? (How about "platypus" or "turnip"?) How about inventing a nonsense word that rhymes with the tough word?
- Why do you think so many playground games have rhymes in them? Is it easier for you to remember a rhyme?
- What are your favorite playground games? Are there songs or chants that go with them?
- What are some of the funny things you can do with words?

Further Concepts to Consider

A community is a place where people live and work together.

Lifestyles differ according to where you live.

People play games for fun and health.

Playing and having fun is sometimes called recreation.

Children in all communities need safe, clean outdoor spaces such as playgrounds to play in.

Community workers maintain and take care of our parks.

People need to help keep our parks and playgrounds clean.

Vocabulary

This story contains many made-up (or “nonsense”) words to explore with the students. Depending on the age of the students, you may also want to point out that the author has eliminated the final “g” in many words, introducing the concepts of dialect and differences in speech patterns.

situation

freestyle

kerplunk

pump

brouhaha

secure

banjo

jackpot

flaunt

education

daystar

Independent Learning

To help facilitate independent study, we have provided a starting list of ideas as well as Special Project Planning Sheets to help children get started. Some areas of interest may include the following:

Communities—urban, suburban, rural

Zoos

Pet shops

Skyscrapers

Bridges

Transportation

Parks

Playgrounds

Animals in a park

Games

Street fairs

County fairs

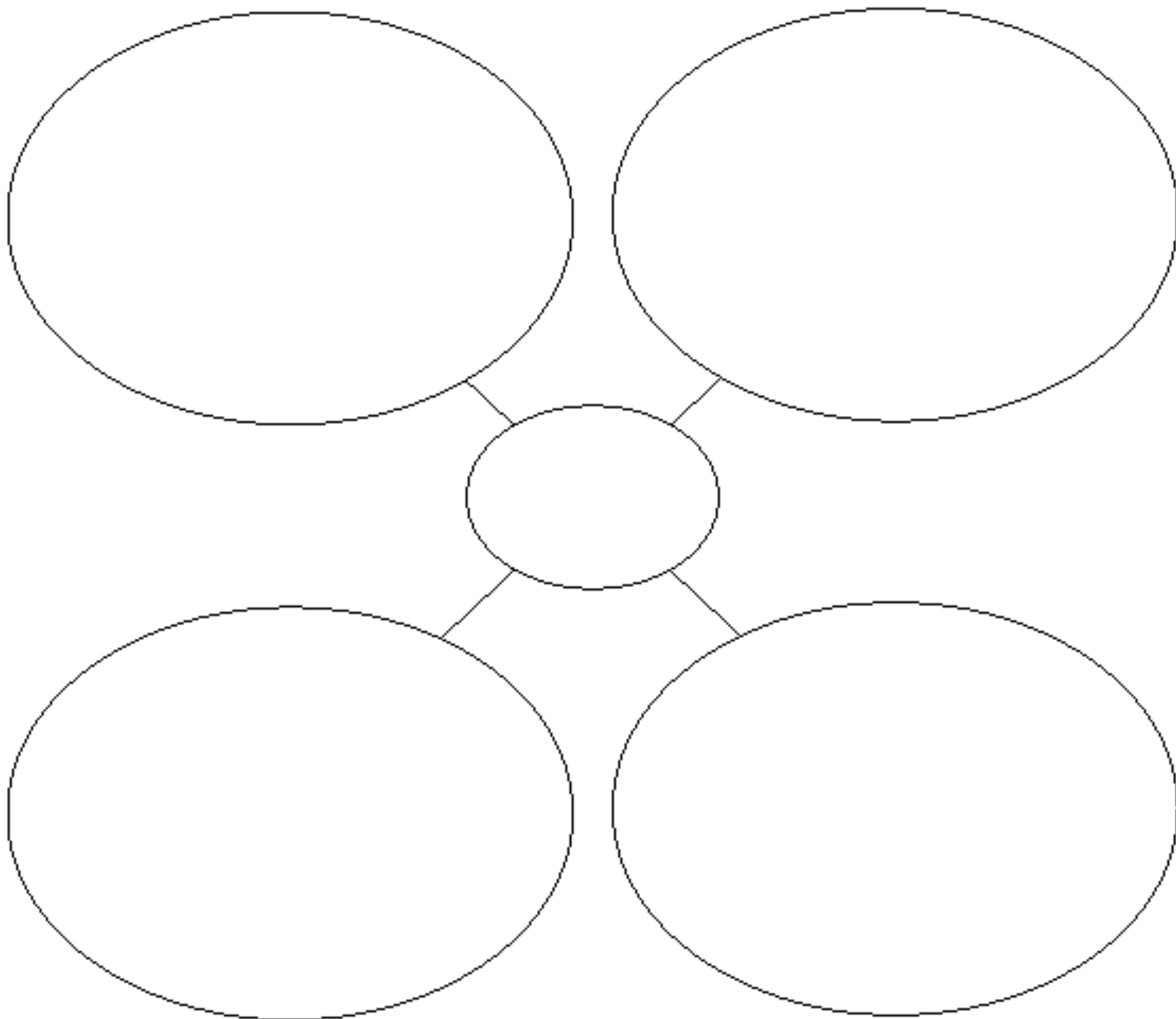
Circus

Kites, balloons

Name: _____

My Special Project Learning Web

Group related topics together using the Learning Web below.



Name: _____

My Special Project Planning Sheet

Some things I want to know about are:

My plan for finding facts/sources of information:

List of important facts:

Writing Prompts: Problem Scenarios

- A stray dog without a collar or leash wanders onto the playground and runs after you and your friends, barking.
- Two young children, Tina and Max, are happily playing in the sandbox. They look up and see Clay walking toward them. Clay is a bully who picks on younger children.
- A group of friends want to play basketball. When they walk over to the hoop they discover that the area is covered with litter.
- Hector has been on the swing set for a very long time and refuses to get off the swing. Other children are taking turns on the swings, but Hector won't. Shanequa has been waiting for Hector's swing, but he tells her to go wait for someone else's swing.
- Ali fell going down the slide and has a cut on his knee. He's sitting on the ground, crying.

Interdisciplinary Activities

Physical Education: My Favorite Game

Initiate a group discussion of games, focusing on the following questions/activities:

What is your favorite game?

Can you teach the class the rules of your game?

Can you demonstrate this game for the class? Ask a friend to help you.

Make a drawing (or diagram) of your game if you need to.

How many children can play this game?

Can you invent a new game?

Is this new game an indoor or outdoor game?

Skills: Using Personal Knowledge and Experience

Health and Safety: Bicycle Safety

Have students discuss these safety questions:

Can you list some bicycle safety rules?

Where can city children ride their bikes safely?

Can you demonstrate some of the safety rules?

Students can work singly or in pairs to create bicycle safety posters.

Can you think of a bicycle safety slogan?

Skills: Gathering Information; Evaluating; Creating Relevant Graphics

Math: Name That Game

Have the children name all of the activities that are named or shown in *Hot-Cha-Cha!* Add to the list other favorite games of the class.

Work in smaller groups to classify the activities on your list into:

those that can be played alone and those that require more than one person

those that require playground equipment and those that don't

those that must be played outdoors and those that could be played indoors

those that require a ball, a jump rope, a Frisbee, etc.

Chart and graph the results of your grouping efforts and share the information with the class.

Skills: Gathering and Interpreting; Presenting Information via Charts or Graphs

Math and Art: Build a Playground Model

Students can work in groups to build a model of their ideal playground. Help them to diagram their plans and ask them to consider the following:

Where will you place each piece of equipment so that all the kids can play in safety and not get in each other's way?

Skills: Analyzing; Planning and Presenting for Peer Evaluation

Interdisciplinary Activities

Language Arts: Meet the Mayor

Students can develop skits around a hypothetical situation, such as a visit to the town's mayor as a means of practicing persuasive speech.

Have students pair up and pretend that they are going to visit the mayor to try and convince him or her that they need a playground in your neighborhood. Each pair must think of some very good reasons why this playground is needed before they enter the mayor's office. What is the best way in which they can present their arguments to the mayor?

Skills: Persuasive Speech; Creative Role Play

Physical Education and Language Arts: The Jump Rope Jingle

Students can plan a jump rope event. All those who are going to participate can make up their own jump rope jingles or rhymes.

What activities will take place at the event? Will they serve refreshments? Ask students to think about these questions as they make their plans.

Skills: Creating Rhymes; Planning Events

Art: Make a Mural

Along with your class, plan to create a mural of a park. Brainstorm first. Ask students to think of all the things they might see in a park: hot dog vendors, balloon man, trees, benches, squirrels, children, playground, swings, see-saw, etc.

For students to consider: What art materials will be needed for this mural? When and where will the class work on the mural?

Skills: Gathering; Evaluating; Planning; Presenting
Information in Creative Form

Social Studies/Language Arts: Around the World in Seven Days

Where in the world is Tunisia? Korea? Madagascar? Can students locate these (or other) countries on a globe or map?

Discuss the fact that there are many countries in the world and that people from most of those countries have come at one time or another to live in the United States. European, African, Asian, and Native American cultures are among those that have contributed to our country's growth. What countries are students interested in learning about? Talk with the class about some ways students can find out more about countries they are interested in:

Ask your parents, relatives and neighbors about the countries they or their families came from

Get books and videos from the library (including atlases and geography books)

Visit a travel agent and get some brochures

Listen to music from this country

Interdisciplinary Activities

Look up “your” country on the Internet
Some ideas for sharing research:

Create a travel poster about the country

Dress as a person from this country

Play music from this country. You can even sing or dance to the music

Bring in some special mementoes and tell about them

Perhaps you can ask a native of this country to visit your class

Share some special food from this country with your class

Perhaps the class can plan a “United Nations” party featuring music, dancing, games and food from different countries. Students can dress in costumes representative of the countries they have researched.

Skills: Using Resources to Acquire Information; Listening; Social Interaction

Language Arts and Art: Dogs Only!

Have the children design a playground for dogs (or other pets). Determine what types of playground equipment it should contain and how the equipment should be placed.

Draw a picture of your pet playground.

Write a short story or rhyme about the pets having fun in their new playground.

Present your pet playground creation to the class.

Skills: Analyzing; Planning and Presenting for Peer Evaluation; Creating Rhymes; Creative Writing

Language Arts: Improve Your Playground

Does your school playground need to be improved? Have children interview their friends and teachers (from other classes) and ask for their opinions. Record their responses.

Present the results of their survey to the class and develop a recommendation for making improvements. Consider the following topics in your recommendation:

How could students raise money to make the improvements?

How would the improvements benefit the students, teachers, community?

How the students would have fun, exercise and get fresh air while the playground was closed for repairs?

Invite the principal to listen to your recommendations.

Skills: Gathering and Interpreting; Persuasive Speech

Interdisciplinary Activities

Music: Find the Beat

Along with students, listen to some different kinds of music (salsa, waltz, two-step, disco, etc.) and identify and discuss the differences. Students can experiment with hand clapping, foot stomping, or available musical instruments to produce a variety of beats. Students may pair off, one creating a beat and the other adding a melody.

Skills: Listening; Evaluating; Creating; Identifying Patterns

Language Arts: Nonsense Words

Talk about nonsense words with the class. What nonsense words are featured in the games or chants with which your students are familiar?

Have each student contribute a favorite nonsense word (borrowed or invented) and supply its definition. Can the class create some simple rhymes using these words?

Skills: Gathering and Interpreting; Creating Rhymes; Listening

Language Arts: Word Play

Along with students, explore some different ways of playing with words. Riddles, jokes, and puns are some of the forms with which students may be most familiar. Examine the way that verbal patterns become a crucial part of certain kinds of word play (the repetitive element in knock-knock jokes, for example) and note the relationship between pattern and rhythm.

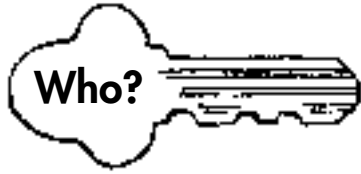
Skills: Creative Speech; Discussion; Evaluation; Identifying Patterns

Language Arts/Visual Arts: Patterns

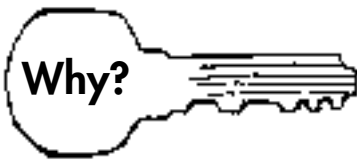
Patterns can be visual, verbal, and aural. Look at patterns on fabric or in graphics and paintings and listen to the verbal patterns in a poem or rap. Can students identify a rhythm as a kind of pattern? Have students look around the classroom for patterns of all kinds—they can be found in a multitude of places (clothing, flags, radiators, piano keys, floorboards or tiles, musical notation, alphabets, and lined paper, to name a few)!

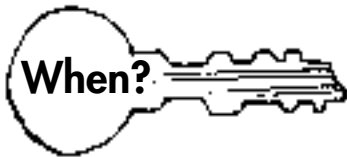
Skills: Discussion; Evaluation; Identifying Patterns

Reporters ask key questions when they interview people for a newspaper story.
You are a reporter writing a story about playground fun.
What questions would you ask the children?

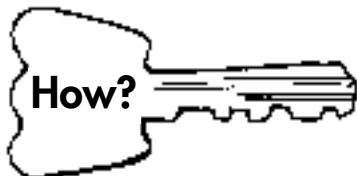












Extended Learning Opportunities

Note: We strongly recommend that teachers preview materials before sharing them with students.

Books:

Browning, Robert. **The Pied Piper of Hamelin.** Illustrated by Terry Small. Gulliver Books. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988. (The classic story.)

Cole, Joanna. **Anna Banana: 101 Jump-Rope Rhymes.** Illustrated by Allan Tiegreen. New York: William Morrow & Co., 1989.

Griego, Margot C., et al. **“Tortillas para Mama” and Other Nursery Rhymes, Spanish and English.** New York: Holt, 1981. Illustrated by Barbara Cooney. (Rhymes from Latin America, in both English and Spanish, accompanied by ideas for finger play.)

Henderson, Roxanne. **The Picture Rulebook of Kids’ Games: Over 200 Favorites.** Illustrated by Michael Brown. Chicago: Contemporary Books, Inc., 1996. (Detailed, illustrated rules for games as diverse as “Egg Polo,” “Hat Thieves,” and “Killer Whale,” as well as for classics like marbles, jacks and “I Spy.”)

Jatamillo, Nelly Palacio. **Grandmother’s Nursery Rhymes/Las Nanas de Abuelita: Lullabies, Tongue Twisters, and Riddles from South America.** New York: Holt, 1996. (Bilingual collection, excellent for younger children.)

Keats, Ezra Jack. **The Snowy Day.** New York: Viking, 1962. (Lovely picture book about a snowstorm in the city.)

Lucas, Eileen. **Peace on the Playground: Nonviolent Ways of Problem Solving.** New York: Franklin Watts, 1991. (For older children but could be of great use to teachers as a resource. A discussion of ways to take action on issues you believe in, how to negotiate difficult issues, and how to work for your community.)

Provinsen, Alice and Martin. **Town and Country.** New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994. (Picture book illustrating, from a child's point of view, the differences between life in the city and life in the country.)

Soto, Gary. **Neighborhood Odes.** New York: Harcourt Brace, 1992. ("Exuberant" poems about life in a Mexican-American neighborhood. Good for reading aloud.)

Stevenson, Robert Louis. **A Child's Garden of Verses.** New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984.

Thompson, Kay. **Eloise.** Cambridge, MA: Schoenhof, 1982. (The always-popular story of the girl who lives in the Plaza Hotel and all the things she does in order to amuse herself.)

Van Laan, Nancy. **Possum Come A-Knocking.** New York: Knopf, 1990. (Catchy story in rhyme.)

Internet Resources:

The New York City Parks and Recreation Calendar provides a look at what's going on in the city's parks and playgrounds.
<http://www.tricky.com/>

The Word Games Page features several rhyming games (children and adults will enjoy these) and links to many related sites.
<http://www.primenet.com/~hodges/susplace.html>

Rhyming Dictionary. Enter a word in the space provided and the computer will provide a list of rhyming words, each of which is linked to its definition and thesaurus entry.
<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~doughb/rhyme.html>