

THIS IS THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT

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by Simms Taback

Themes: Art, poetry

Grade Level: K-2

Running Time: 7 minutes

SUMMARY

This colorful and lively video brings to life the favorite children's rhyme. Jack's house is like no other and its inhabitants are full of fun and surprises. Caldecott Award winning author Simms Taback adds his own creative wit to the endless commotion. From different kinds of rats, to different varieties of cats, to different flavors of cheese, this video takes viewers deeper into Jack's house than they've probably ever been. There is even a special guest star at the end of this humorous and unique interpretation of an age-old classic, whose appearance will teach children about its often forgotten origins.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the cadence and repetition of poetry through listening, speaking, and writing.
- Students will learn about Randolph Caldecott and the Caldecott Medal for art in children's literature.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Read aloud the traditional poem, "The House That Jack Built." Encourage children to join into the reading as they begin to remember the sequence and repetition. Suggested activities:

- Shared reading: Copy the poem in big letters onto chart paper. Draw simple pictures beneath the key words such as: house, Jack, rat, cheese, etc. Use a pointer to track the words as you and the children read them aloud together.
- Total Physical Response (TPR): This is an

instructional method that works very well to build oral language for English language learners. Create simple movements to correspond to the key words in the poem. As you and the children chant the poem aloud together, perform these movements as you say the corresponding words. After practicing several times, you begin to whisper the words, but the children continue to say them aloud. Continue to perform the movements. As the children become proficient, you say fewer and fewer of the key words until you are silently acting out the movements while the children chant the poem independently (also acting out the movements).

• Ask students to look for differences between the traditional poem and Taback's interpretation in the video. Guiding questions:

- How does Simms Taback make the poem come alive? Does he change the words or does he do it through art and illustrations or both? What other differences do you notice?
- Write down (or draw) one new thing that you learned from the video that was not included in the traditional poem.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Discuss Randolph Caldecott and the Caldecott Medal. Share biographical information about Randolph Caldecott and historical information about the Caldecott Medal. Show students examples of books that have won the Caldecott Medal (or Honor Medal) including Simms Taback's *Joseph Had a Little Overcoat* and *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. Guiding questions:

- Why did these books win awards for art? What makes the art in these books different from the art you have seen in other books? (You may want to provide examples of non-Caldecott Medal winning books)
- How does the art in these books support the story?

Read aloud another classic poem, such as "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost or "The Red Wheelbarrow" by William Carlos Williams. Ask students to try to visualize the action or setting of the poem, and to try to depict a part or all of it in a drawing. Remind students that details that are not in the poem can be added to the drawing to enhance the meaning of the poem, as they see it.

Invite children to write their own poetry about their own house, using the model and cadence of the traditional poem. They can entitle it, "This is the House That (Child's Name) Built." Encourage children to be creative by reminding them that they can have any animals and people in their houses that they want to. Alternatively, you can write a class poem where children brainstorm ideas, write, and illustrate the poem together. This can also be presented as a play or skit for other grades or classes.

Other videos based on books by Simms Taback available from Weston Woods are:

Joseph Had a Little Overcoat (Caldecott)
There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly (Caldecott)

Other videos on poetry available from Weston Woods are:

Antarctic Antics by Judy Sierra, ill. by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey
How Do Dinosaurs Say Good Night? by Jane Yolen, ill. by Mark Teague
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