

**Zebra Zebra Rat: Rhythm, Music and Literature**  
**2008 Arts Integrated Lesson Plan Contest**

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Language Arts, Music, Visual Art

**Standards:**

**Language Arts**

**Literary Text Standard**

Students enhance their understanding of the human story by reading literary texts that represent a variety of authors, cultures and eras. They learn to apply the reading process to the various genres of literature, including fables, folk tales, short stories, novels, poetry and drama. They demonstrate their comprehension by describing and discussing the elements of literature (e.g., setting, character and plot), analyzing the author's use of language (e.g., word choice and figurative language), comparing and contrasting texts, inferring theme and meaning and responding to text in critical and creative ways. Strategic readers learn to explain, analyze and critique literary text to achieve deep understanding.

**Writing Applications Standard**

Students need to understand that various types of writing require different language, formatting and special vocabulary. Writing serves many purposes across the curriculum and takes various forms. Beginning writers learn about the various purposes of writing; they attempt and use a small range of familiar forms (e.g., letters). Developing writers are able to select text forms to suit purpose and audience. They can explain why some text forms are more suited to a purpose than others and begin to use content-specific vocabulary to achieve their communication goals. Proficient writers control effectively the language and structural features of a large repertoire of text forms. They deliberately choose vocabulary to enhance text and structure in their writing according to audience and purpose

**Music:**

Content Standard: Connections, Relationships and Applications Students identify similarities and differences between music and other arts disciplines. Students recognize the relationship between concepts and skills learned through music with knowledge learned in other curricular subjects, life experiences and potential careers in and outside the arts. Students develop a desire for lifelong learning in music.

**Visual Art:**

Content Standard: Creative Expression and Communication Students create artworks that demonstrate understanding of materials, processes, tools, media, techniques and available technology. They understand how to use art elements, principles and images to communicate their ideas in a variety of visual forms.

**Content Standard:**

Connections, Relationships and Applications Students connect and apply their learning of visual art to the study of other arts areas and disciplines outside the

arts. They understand relationships between and among concepts and ideas that are common across subjects in the curriculum. Students recognize the importance of lifelong learning and experience in visual art.

**Lesson Summary:**

Students will read *Tanka Tanka Skunk* by Steve Webb, discuss rhythm and how it applies to words, and copy rhythms in the book to create a class poem or book. (This lesson can easily be adapted for older students by having them complete an independent poem using the same rhythm patterns.)

**Objectives:** Students will determine the number of syllables in words.

Students will use rhythm sticks to tap out the rhythm of various parts of the book *Tanka Tanka Skunk*.

Students will create a poem/book based on the same rhythm patterns in the book, *Tanka Tanka Skunk*.

**Materials:** *Tanka Tanka Skunk* by Steve Webb, rhythm sticks for each child, animal cards (several copies of each animal), paper, pencil, and art supplies

**Timeline:** Five or six 30-45 minute sessions for whole group project.

**Warm-up:** Play Hands, Hands, Fingers, Thumbs (directions attached) to get everyone to focus on rhythm. Ask students what is rhythm and discuss rhythm.

**Presentation:**

1. Read *Tanka Tanka Skunk*. Ask students to pay attention to the different rhythm patterns. After reading each page, have students repeat the lines.
2. Use rhythm sticks to tap out the different rhythms in the book. The chorus of the book is the most important rhythm and is repeated several times in the book. (It is also where the title comes from.) The chorus is, “Skunka, Tanka, Skunka, Tanka, Tanka, Tanka, Skunk!” Pay attention to how the words are printed on the page. It gives you clues as to how loud or soft and how quickly you should read the pages. The chorus, along with several other pages, seem to start slow and soft and gets louder and faster as you read. The words are printed in a lighter and smaller font at the top of the page and grow darker and larger as you read through the page. As you read, pay attention to which syllable has the stress and really emphasize that part of the syllable. Have the class repeat each page after you have read the page aloud to them. Have the class pay attention to the syllables and which part of the word has the stress. When using the rhythm sticks, the stressed part of the word would receive a harder hit on the floor than the unstressed part.

3. Discuss syllables. Have the students practice counting the syllables in their names. Discuss the different animals used in the book. Have students count the number of syllables in the names of some of the animals.

4. Hold up different animal cards (Include animals that are in the book along with many animals that are not in the book. To include some science standards, choose some animals that are studied in your grade level such as caterpillar and butterfly.) Have students count the number of syllables in each name. Sort the animals into groups based on syllables. Across the top of the board, put the numbers 1- 5. As the students count the number of syllables in each animal name, tape the animal under the correct number. This will make writing much easier and give the class ideas of some animals to use. If the students think of other animals they want to include in their book, have them count the syllables and add the animal to the correct list.

5. Use the format of *Tanka Tanka Skunk* to create a poem/book written by the class. Everyone can make their own illustration of the poem/book or the class can make one book. (Make a cheat sheet for each page. Make sure to include the number of syllables and the pattern for each page. For example, the chorus cheat sheet page had the text, “Skunka, Tanka, Skunka, Tanka, Tanka, Tanka, Skunk!” and had the numbers 2-2-2-2-2-2-1. This told me that the first 6 words had 2 syllables and the last word had one syllable.) I read the words on the page aloud so the class could hear the rhythm the author chose and let them choose different animals to try to replicate the rhythm using the same number of syllables. The class soon realized that even though they had the correct number of syllables, the text didn’t always flow or “sound right”. The class realized that some words had a strong beginning syllable while other words had a strong middle or ending syllable. They had to choose animal names with the strong syllable in the correct place to help with the flow. As the students made their version of the book, we taped the extra animal pictures up on the wall so all students could “read” our version of the book together. We called our book *Zebra, Zebra, Rat* so the chorus of our book was Ratta, Zebra, Ratta, Zebra, Zebra, Zebra, Rat! The pictures were rat, zebra, rat, zebra, zebra, zebra, rat. All students were able to look up at the picture cards that we taped to the chorus page and read our book. We followed the same process for each page of the book. We left our work taped to the wall until the entire book was written so we could easily go back and see which animals we had used and read the rhythm and check the flow from one page to the next.

6. Tap out different rhythms in new poem/book and compare to *Tanka Tanka Skunk*. Tap out the rhythm of one page of *Tanka Tanka Skunk* and the corresponding page of the class book. How do they compare? Does the text flow smoothly on that page? Does the text flow from page to page? If not, how can the class change it so it will flow better? After the class is satisfied with the book, each child can illustrate their own book or the class can have 1 book and the children can each illustrate 1-2 pages.

**Closing:** Review rhythm and what makes rhythm. How is poetry like music?

**Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated based on participation in discussions, effort in tapping out rhythms, and counting syllables. They will also be evaluated on their finished product.

**Extensions:** Use poem to write a class book with illustrations of the different animals. Students can tap out the rhythms while reading their book. Student Treasures will publish your class book for free. All details are on their website: <http://studenttreasures.com/> (Attached are the chorus pages and a couple of other pages of our class book as an example.)

**Directions for Hands, Hands, Fingers, Thumb:**

(Say and hold up body parts) “Hand, Hand, Fingererersssss, Thumb! (Pat rhythm on legs as you say) Dum-didi-dum-didi-dum dum dum! Then have the class add new verses using different body parts. Our version has 4 verses. 1. Hand, hand fingers thumb! Dum-didi-dum-didi-dum dum dum! 2. Leg, leg, head, belly! Dum-didi-dum-didi-dum dum dum! 3. Elbow, elbow, knees, nose! Dum-didi-dum-didi-dum dum dum! 4. Arm, arm, feet, ears! Dum-didi-dum-didi-dum dum dum! After doing it once or twice, we add different elements such as really slow, or super fast, or super quiet. The students are really good at coming up with different elements to keep the game fun.

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Participation	Played an active part in discussion. Made many appropriate comments, answered questions, and showed good listening behaviors.	Answered some questions, made few appropriate comments, and showed good listening behaviors.	Made occasional comments and answered some questions.	Refused to participate or disrupted.
Syllabication	Actively tapped out syllables to words even when it wasn't their turn.	Tapped out syllables to words when it was their turn. Made effort to tap out syllables to classmates words.	Only tapped out syllables when it was their turn, but needed prompting.	Refused to participate or disrupted.
Story/Poem	Composed a poem/story with appropriate rhythm and used a variety of animals to create an interesting and creative poem/story.	Composed a poem/story with some appropriate rhythm and used a few different animals to create poem/story.	Poem/story used very few animals, rhythms are not appropriate, and had little creativity.	Refused to participate or disrupted.
Behavior	Followed all classroom rules. Responded to peers kindly and appropriately.	Needed one or two prompts to follow rules.	Needed much prompting to follow rules and/or used rhythm sticks inappropriately.	Refused to participate or disrupted.
Music	Used rhythm sticks appropriately. Tapped out various rhythms appropriately and accurately.	Used rhythm sticks appropriately but was unable to tap out the various rhythms accurately.	Used rhythm sticks inappropriately and/or was unable to tap out any rhythms accurately.	Refused to participate or disrupted.
Visual Art	Pictures are neat and match the animals described in the story	Pictures are mostly neat and match most of the animals in the story.	Pictures are very messy and/or do not match with the words of the story.	Refused to participate or disrupted.