

Make up a Three Bears Ballad

It's easier than it looks to put a story to music - especially when you already know the story and the music!

A good ballad has a refrain for everyone to join in, so for the music, we'll use the tune of Old Macdonald had a farm. For the story, we will use Goldilocks and the Three Bears. If you are using this as a lesson plan, begin by revising the song and the story with the children.

Next, help the children to think of something to replace the refrain "ee-i ee-i o" in the song. It could be an equally meaningless set of sounds (eg "ding dong, ding dong, doing!") or words that have to do with the story ("Goldi, Goldi Locks!").

The next step is to break the story down into very short bullet points and decide which are the most important for the plot. A good way to do this is to take suggestions from the children, writing each one up as a bullet point, and then decide as a class on 8 points that tell the whole story. Alternatively, you could challenge the children in groups or individually to tell the story in just 8 sentences. It could end up looking like this:

- Three bears lived in a house in the woods.
- They went for a walk while their porridge cooled down.
- A girl called Goldilocks walked into the house.
- Goldilocks ate all Baby Bear's porridge.
- Goldilocks broke Baby Bear's chair.
- Goldilocks went to sleep in Baby Bear's bed.
- The bears came home and found the mess.
- They found Goldilocks asleep and chased her away.

Each bullet point will now become a verse in the ballad. The tune of 'Old Macdonald' allows for two lines, which don't have to rhyme, and a lot of noises in between, which the children will enjoy creating! You may want to add the sounds to the bullet points first. For example, your first bullet point could look like this:

- Three bears lived in a house in the woods. (Grr, grr)

and your first verse would therefore come out something like this:

*In the woods there was a house,
Goldi, Goldi locks!
And in that house there lived three bears,
Goldi, Goldi locks!
With a grr, grr here and a grr, grr there,
Here a grr, there a grr, everywhere a grr, grr
In the woods there was a house,
Goldi, Goldilocks!*

Once you have your first verse, sing it through to test it. You may want to continue the song with the whole class, or send the children off in groups to have a go at a verse each and bring them all back together at the end of the lesson to perform the whole thing.

Once you have your Three Bears Ballad, why not invite Snail Tales to come to your school and take your children to the next level? Visit www.snailtales.org/book and check out our *Ballads & Poems* programme for more details!



The more stories your children are immersed in, be they fairy tales or folk tales, the more focused their imaginations can become. Being encouraged to play around with the format of stories they know well, such as by making ballads, will inspire their enthusiasm for using their imagination – which can then feed into creating stories from scratch. Remember: a child's excitement by story is closely followed by their desire to read and write.

This is the premise behind our Little Birds workshops, which include many more ways to expand your children's story vocabulary, storytelling skills, and pride in their own creativity – especially when their best stories could be made famous in their local theatre!

For more information, and to book, visit www.snailtales.org/littlebirds, email us at littlebirds@snailtales.org, or call 01223 776 220.