Activities

This Train

Grades: PreK–K, 1–2

Overview
As children talk about trains, engines and the various kinds of railway cars they begin an exploration of opposites.

Book Summary
Using large, simple text and concepts of contrast and opposites, writer and illustrator Paul Collicutt appeals to children's fascination with trains. Inside pages depict trains from all over the world.

Objective
Children will learn about the concept of opposites by creating a chart to record information about the characteristics of the trains depicted in the book.
Before Reading
Engage the children in a discussion about trains. Ask them to share what they already know. Encourage them to share their own experiences riding on or observing trains. Identify the types of trains that may be located in your community.

Teaching Plan
All Aboard the Read-Aloud Train
Reread the book several times so the class will become familiar with the repetitive text and the concept of opposites. Encourage them to identify the opposite concepts presented in the book. Read the first page spread and have a child read the accompanying page to identify the opposite concept presented. Once they are familiar with the text, invite them to read the pages by themselves using picture clues, opposite clues, and beginning sounds.

Charting Train Information

Materials
- Chart paper
- Markers, crayons, and pencils

Write the heading "This Train Is" on the top of a sheet of chart paper. Draw a line down the center of the page to make two columns. Tell the children that you will reread the book and then they will list all of the different types of trains depicted in the story. After reading the book, ask the class to recall the different types of trains and the opposite concept for each train they think of. List the opposite concepts side by side, in separate columns, using one color marker for the left column and another color marker for the right column to distinguish the opposite words. Then compare the list to the book. Did they list every train depicted in the book? Include any additional information that was not listed on their chart. How many different concepts did they list?
Now create another chart to summarize what the class learned about trains. Review each opposite concept on the first chart and then assist the children in summarizing the concept. For example: "Trains have different colors" or "Trains carry different types of things."

Other Books About Trains
Trains
by Byron Barton
This simple picture book with bold illustrations will provide beginning readers with simple and engaging information about trains.
DK Big Book of Trains
by Christine Heap
Train enthusiasts of all ages will love this informational book full of vivid photographs and facts about all types of trains from around the world.
The Little Red Caboose (My First Hello Reader! Series)
by Steve Metzger
Children will love this easy-to-read version of the classic children's song.

Other Books by Paul Collicutt
This Boat This Plane
Teaching plan written by Risa Young

- Subjects:
  Charts and Graphs, Reading, Listening, Opposites and Contrasts, Trains and Subways