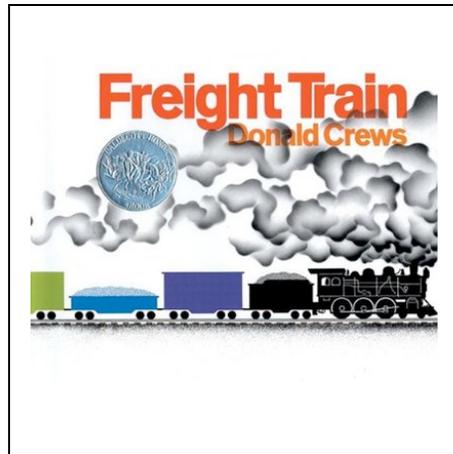


Using picture books in English Language classes 3 - 6 year olds

Freight Train by Donald Crews



Before reading this picture book

Children should also be familiar with colours and some transport words, including train.
NB. Donald Crew uses the word trestle in this book, change it to bridge.

Objectives:

At the end of this lesson children will be able to sequence the colours of the train and mime the train's journey.

Materials needed for the lesson:

A colour song; flashcards of: a train track, a train, a train station, a tunnel, a city, and a bridge (trestle). A black and white outline of a train pulling seven cars, just like the one on the front cover.

Pre Picture book storytelling activity:

1. Sing a colour song that you all know.
2. Ask the children to sit down and show them the picture of the train you have brought. Praise those children who remember what it is in English. Show them the track, and mime following a track with your hands. Ask the children where the train goes when it's on the track. Elicit the words station, city, tunnel and bridge. Play a couple of action games with these words, so that the children feel at ease with them.
3. Explain that you are going to tell them a story about a train. Show them the front and back covers of the book, and ask them if they know what kind of train it is. Explain it is a freight train and that it uses coal to fuel it, and that is why there is lots of smoke. Ask them if they can say all the colours in English, and point to each car as they say the colours. Ask them where they think the train will go on its journey. They should repeat some of the words you have just introduced, if not remind them. Ask them to listen carefully and see if the train visits all the places on the flashcards.

During picture book storytelling activity.

1. Open the book on the first page of the story, and ask the children if they know what is in the illustration. Read the text, and turn the page. Point to the red caboose and ask the children what colour it is, praise them and say, '*Red caboose at the back.*' Continue with the other cars, pointing praising and reading the text, focussing on the colour words. If any

of the children are able to say the names of parts of the trains in their mother tongue, praise them too!

2. When you get to the black tender and steam engine let the children look hard. They may notice the numbers on the tender and call them out, they may also recognise the letters on the steam engine.

3. Turn the page, '*Freight train!*' Point to the cars again and invite the children to say the colours once more. Turn the page: '*Moving*' Discuss with the children what they think is happening to the train. Turn the page: '*Going through ...*' pause to see if they can remember the word '*tunnel*'. Continue, reading the text and pausing before the words they may know. Use your hands to provide gestures for '*through*', '*past*' and '*over*'. As you reach the end of the book, increase your rhythm... '*Moving in darkness. Moving in daylight. Going, going ...*' Turn the page: '*Gone!*'

4. Close the book and ask the children if they enjoyed the story. They may say yes and ask you to read it again. However, before you do this, ask them to tell you which of the flashcard words did not appear in the story. Praise them if they were able to remember.

5. Retell the story, increasing your use of rhythm as the train gains in momentum on its journey. Invite the children, when ever possible, to call out the colours and join in with the words they know.

Post picture book storytelling activities.

1. **Sequencing the freight train colours:** Make a miniature version of the freight train, the outlines are easy to copy from the illustrations and ask the children to colour the various cars, sequencing the colours as they appear in the story. Use these pictures as a display in the classroom called '*Our freight train*'.

2. **Scenery:** You can create scenery for the train to pass. Or the children can draw these scenes, cut out their colourful train and run it past them all. This provides natural use of prepositions, as well as discussing where trains can go.

3. **Freight train role-play:** Try role-playing the journey, the children really enjoy taking part. Make head gear in the shape of the freight train for eight children, using the freight train colours. The remaining children can be a track (two children with their legs sticking out for the train to step over); a tunnel (children holding hands high up); houses (children forming triangular roves with their arms) a bridge/ trestle (A chair or two to climb over); darkness (a child holding a moon); daylight (a child holding a sun). The freight train children hold onto each other and begin their journey, '*Through tunnels, by cities, crossing bridges, in darkness, in daylight. Going going...*' altogether the train disappears and the children say, '*Gone!*'. You will need to repeat this role-play several times so that all children get a chance to be the freight train.