

The Five Ws: Who? What? Where? When? Why?

This activity helps children learn the five important questions to answer when reading any book.

How to Do It

1. Choose a story to read to the children as they sit in a circle. For our example, we will use *The Foolish Tortoise* by Richard Buckley.
2. As you read, ask the children to listen for the answers to five questions about the story: who, what, where, when, and why. **Who** is the main character? **What** does that character do? **Where** does the character live? **When** does the story take place? **Why** does the character do the actions?
3. Provide a selection of props for the children to use as they act out the answers to the five questions.
4. When you finish reading, tell the children they will now be the character, or characters, in the book, and act out the answers to the five questions.
5. Ask children to answer the five *W* questions. After each answer, children can stand up and take a trip around you in a circle, doing the actions.
 - Who? The Tortoise, green with a shell on his back.
The class becomes Tortoise, miming having a shell and moving around the circle the way the Tortoise moves.
 - What? The Tortoise takes off his shell and has adventures until he puts the shell back on.
The class does an action to represent one of the Tortoise's adventures.
 - Where? The Tortoise is walking on land, near a river, under sun, in rain and wind, and under a moon.
The class pretends to move in these environments. How would a tortoise move on land? Near a river? in the sun? in the rain? in the wind? under a moon?
 - When? The Tortoise starts the adventures in the day and ends at night.
The class moves like a tortoise in daytime and at night.
 - Why? The Tortoise is tired of his shell and wants to have adventures.
The class moves to represent the Tortoise taking off his shell.

6. Then put all of these actions together. Call out the questions, answers, and actions as you go along. As you prompt them with questions, ask the children to do the actions of the story. You can continue to have children move around you in the circle, or take the children on a trip through the classroom and create a larger environment for the action of the story.

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