

Learning with Roald Dahl

Dirty Beasts

LOOK OUT FOR 'THE LION'

Children love Roald Dahl's jokes and the 'nastiness' in his books. Their love of Roald Dahl's anarchic fun can be a perfect way of getting them to explore the language. The starting point must always be to enjoy the rhyme itself before you start finding literacy work to do. However, some of the most tedious aspects of literacy learning can be made fun if the children work on texts they enjoy.

Here is a rhyme called 'The Lion' from *Dirty Beasts* that has some gruesome aspects underneath the funny lines:

*The lion just adores to eat
A lot of red and tender meat,
And if you ask the lion what
Is much the tenderest of the lot,
He will not say a roast of lamb
Or curried beef or devilled ham
Or crispy pork or corned beef hash
Or sausages or mutton mash.
Then could it be a big plump hen?
He answers no. What is it, then?
Oh, lion dear, could I not make
You happy with a lovely steak?
Could I entice you from your lair
With rabbit pie or roasted hare?
The lion smiled and shook his head.
He came up very close and said,
'The meat I am about to chew
Is neither steak nor chops. IT'S YOU.'*

1. Look at the rhyming couplets and list the rhyming words. Which ones have the same rhyme spelling? (**hen/then, hash/mash**). Which words rhyme but are spelt differently? (**what/lot, lamb/ham, make/steak**)

2. Count the number of syllables in each line and clap the rhythm.

3. Learn the rhyme off by heart and make a 'performance' out of it.

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