

Welcome to February! Although the shortest month of the year, February is full of events. This is how I plan to teach using the February edition of *Let's Find Out*.

PHOTO STORY

The class and I will discuss the cover photo. I'll ask children to describe the different ways they show love. After reading, I'll write "I show love by..." on a chart. Then I'll give each child an opportunity to complete the sentence. I will write it on the chart with the child's name. As a class, children will read the Photo Story chorally, using the photos as reading cues.

PEOPLE & PLACES

I'll read the title "A Tour of the White House" and ask the class "Who lives in the White House?" We will discuss who the President is and why the White House is an important place. Then we'll identify the rooms and focus on color words and the functions of each room. I will follow up this activity by reading stories that celebrate Lincoln's and Washington's birthdays.

MINI-BOOK

The class and I will put together the Mini-Book. We will read each page and recognize new vocabulary. I'll focus on the word *inventor* and ask questions about the items invented by George Washington Carver. Then, we'll follow the instructions on the Discovery Card and make peanut butter—a healthy, yummy treat!

SCIENCE

February brings to mind cold weather. Groundhog Day is a nice time to begin thinking about spring and the change in seasons. Using the information and the vocabulary from the story, we'll develop a semantic web about the groundhog.

Enjoy sharing these special days with your children. Have a fun-filled February.

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Reading and Writing Biographies

by Lynn Cohen

Children reenact the lives of others through dramatic play. They hear and tell stories about family and friends, and connect what is read to their own knowledge and experience. In the dramatic-play area you'll find chefs, firefighters, mothers, and fathers. These characters provide opportunities for children to write their own biographies and autobiographies.

Biographies provide a window into other people's lives. They are rich with love, understanding, success, and failure. In reading and writing workshops, you can introduce children to the genre of biography. Here are some suggestions:

- Read biographies throughout the year. Select those that focus primarily on human rather than historical issues. Provide books that represent many cultures.
- Select a person at school for children to interview and write a biography of. They can prepare and ask questions about the lives of school personnel.
- Create time lines to help children look at their own remarkable lives and write an autobiography. Encourage children to write about events in their lives. Ask them to find out their length at birth, and cut strips of paper that length. Have children write or draw things they could do as a baby on the strips. Then cut strips equal to children's height now and have them write about things they do at this age. Talk about the differences.

Young children lack the perspective to understand historical events, but through reading and writing biographies, they will obtain information and an emotional understanding of the experience of others.

RECOMMENDED SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

- *Arthur Meets the President* by T. Brown (Little, Brown). Children will enjoy following Arthur and his class on their trip to the White House.
- *George Washington Carver, Plant Doctor* by Miena Benitez (Raintree). Inspire children to become the best they can be! Perfect for reading aloud.
- *A House Is a House for Me* by Mary Ann Hoberman (Scholastic). A rhyme about houses and those who inhabit them.

- *Lion Dancer: Ernie Wan's Chinese New Year* by Kate Waters and Madeline Solvenz-Low (Scholastic). Six-year-old Ernie will perform his first Lion Dance for the New Year celebration.
- *Shake It to the One That You Love the Best* (Scholastic). Introduce children to the world of African, American, Creole, and Caribbean beats and rhythms. (audiocassette)

Science
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