

What Is Hiding Inside the Story?

Let's look at how we can take a simple story and extend the learning beyond the pages of the book.

A familiar example is *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*, written by Bill Martin Jr. and illustrated by Eric Carle. The story introduces animals, colors, repetition, rhythm, and prediction. When we look more closely, we discover much more hiding inside it.

Learning Opportunities

- Colors: recognize, name, compare, and find colors in the room.
- Animals and sounds: explore loud, quiet, high, and low sounds.
- Shapes and features: notice wings, paws, beaks, tails, and body shapes.
- Movement: walk, fly, or waddle like the characters.
- Personality and voice: make a character shy, excited, sleepy, silly, curious, or serious.
- Repetition and prediction: remember the sequence and anticipate what comes next.

You do not have to explore every opportunity during one reading. Choose one or two based on your purpose and the children's interests. Let the story remain a story.

Taking the Story Beyond Circle Time

- Search the classroom for matching colors.
- Move like the different animals.
- Sort animal pictures by color, size, or movement.
- Create artwork inspired by the illustrations.
- Count or sequence the animals.
- Invent a new animal and add it to the story.
- Give a character a personality, voice, or emotion.

A book gives us the story. The storyteller helps children discover everything waiting inside it.

What Is a Participation Technique?

A participation technique is a simple way to invite children into the storytelling experience.

Instead of only listening, children may be encouraged to:

- Repeat a phrase
- Answer or ask a question
- Predict what happens next
- Make a character's sound
- Copy a movement
- Show an emotion with their faces
- Count objects or characters
- Find a color or shape
- Sing part of the story
- Help create the next part of the story

Choose one participation technique that feels natural and supports the story.