

## Hey, diddle, diddle

### by Polly Childerhouse

**Age:** Children (aged 2 to 6)

**Level:** Beginner (A1)

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Objectives:** To expose children to the sounds of the English language, as well as to rhyme, stress and intonation; to teach the children the main vocabulary from the nursery rhyme *Hey, diddle, diddle*; to encourage the children to sing the nursery rhyme

**Key skills:** Listening, speaking (singing)

**Materials:** A *Hey, diddle, diddle* sensory bin (see Preparation section)

## Preparation

Before the lesson, create a *Hey, diddle, diddle* sensory bin (see the photo below). It should contain:

- coloured blue rice and glitter to represent the night sky;
- a neon moon and some neon stars;
- a toy cat;
- a dog;
- a fiddle;
- a variety of bowls (or dishes) and spoons.



## Procedure

1. Introduce the sensory bin to the children. Make a big deal out of what could be in the box. Give it a shake and ask children what could be inside.
2. Put your ear to the box and ask the children to listen:
  - Say '*What can you hear?*'
  - Make a mooing noise. Ask '*What is it?*'
  - Elicit the answer: *a cow*.
  - Take the cow out of the box and hold it up to show them.
3. Repeat this with the cat and the dog.
4. Now, do the action of playing a fiddle. Ask the children what it could be, then take the fiddle out of the box.
5. Mime eating with a dish and spoon. Ask the children what the items could be and take them out of the box.
6. When all the objects are out of the sensory bin, play a variety of games to help the children learn the words.
  - a. Miming is a fun and physical way to practise the words. Ask the children to think of mimes. For example:
    - a cat: pretend to lick the back of your hand
    - a fiddle: play an imaginary fiddle
    - a cow: pretend to milk a cow
    - the moon: curl your outstretched arms to make a crescent shape
    - a dog: pant with your tongue sticking out and hold your hands up representing paws
    - a dish and spoon: mime eating
  - b. Hide the items in the sensory bin and ask individual children to find them.
    - '*Where is the cat? ... Yes, there it is!*'

- c. Tell the little story in the rhyme using the items in the sensory bin as prompts:
  - ‘One day, a cat played on his fiddle and the cow jumped over the moon!’
  - (Cup your hand over your mouth and laugh out loud.) ‘The dog laughed because it was so funny. Do you know what the dish and spoon did? They ran away! I wonder if they were scared.’
- d. Sing the nursery rhyme. I don’t often use CDs or downloads in the classroom as the music is too fast. Don’t be afraid to use your own voice. Here is a link to the rhyme, if you’re unfamiliar with it: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvhfaOLaVGU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvhfaOLaVGU).

Sing the rhyme a couple of times. Encourage the children to tap their knees to the beat of the music and to join in when they can. Gradually introduce some actions for the rhyme.

#### Hey, diddle, diddle

(Play an imaginary fiddle.)

#### The cat and the fiddle

#### The cow jumped over the moon

(Move your arm up high in the air, then down again the other side of your body.)

#### The little dog laughed to see such fun

(Cup hand over mouth as if you’re laughing.)

#### And the dish ran away with the spoon

(Move your arms as if you’re running or run on the spot.)

## Extensions

1. Free play with the sensory bin – Allow the children to play in the sensory bin and play alongside them, giving a running commentary on what they are doing.
  - ‘You’re filling the dish up.’
  - ‘There is a star on top.’
  - ‘Oops, the rice spilt on the floor!’
2. Play dough – We simply can’t miss out play dough as a way to re-use the vocabulary. To set the activity up, lay out:
  - some play dough;
  - dog, cat and cow animal cutters;
  - some spoons and some dishes;
  - some neon moons and stars.

Play alongside your children, giving a running commentary on what they are doing ‘You’ve chosen the black play dough. I wonder what you’re going to make. You’ve made a cat with big eyes!’