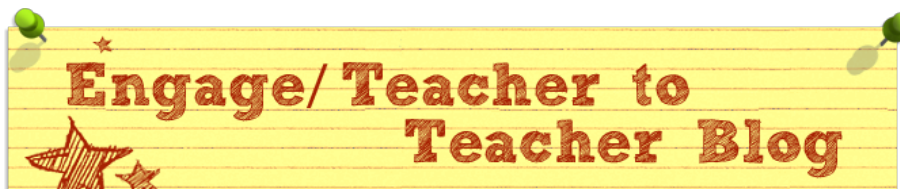


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Putting Books to Work: INTERRUPTING CHICKEN by David Ezra Stein



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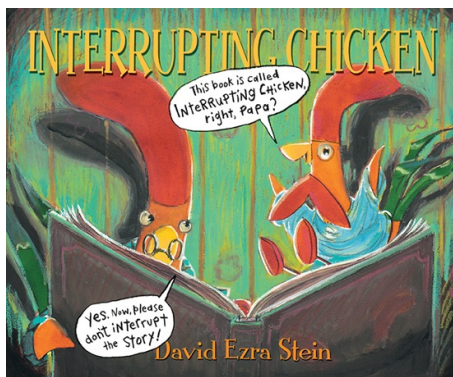
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Putting INTERRUPTING CHICKEN to Work By Kathy Prater

INTERRUPTING CHICKEN (Candlewick, 2010)
Pre-K through Third Grade

INTERRUPTING CHICKEN is a story of a father chicken attempting to put his daughter, Little Chicken, to bed for the night. Little Chicken asks Father to read her a bedtime story and he agrees after reminding her to listen and not interrupt. She promises to be good and the first story begins.

During the reading of the first story, HANSEL AND GRETEL, Little Chicken begins to listen but has to alter the ending of the story just when the old woman invites the children inside. Little Chicken shows great concern for the characters in the story and doesn't want them to get hurt. Father reminds her that she is interrupting and she promises, again, to be good. Father begins to read the next story, LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, and the same thing happens. Little Chicken gets so involved in the story she feels part of it and tries to save the girl.



The illustrations in this story tell another tale, showing the emotions that Little Chicken and Father go through during the experience of bed time routines. Young children are captivated by the colorful and detailed illustrations and will ask for the story to be read over again. Each reading brings new interest and the story is easily retold by the children. The illustrations and easy to remember text will help to build literacy skills of retelling, sequencing, and draw readers of all ages into the story of Father and Little Chicken.

Cross-curricular Connections: Character Education, Science, Reading, Art

Ideas for Classroom Use:

Retelling Using Real Life Experiences (Pre-K through First Grade)

The purpose of this activity is to engage students with the text and use a retelling of the story to connect with real life experiences. After reading the story to the

children, ask them what the problem in the story from Father's point of view, illustrating the need for Little Chicken to relax and the desire of Father to finish the story. Then discuss the problem from Little Chicken's point of view, illustrating concern for the characters and a desire to help. Discuss moments in the student's lives when a similar situation may have occurred. Ask students to illustrate a time when they felt like Little Chicken and write or dictate as appropriate the story of the event.

Life with Chickens (Second and Third Grade)

The purpose of this activity is to begin to distinguish fiction and fantasy from nonfiction. Use INTERRUPTING CHICKEN as an opening story for a unit on the life cycle of a chicken. Discuss the surroundings and actions of a chicken and have students brainstorm about a chicken's actual activities. Lead students to determine if the chickens in the story are exhibiting typical behavior of chickens. Then, through guided research, find examples of chickens in typical habitats and compare their activities. Chart similarities and differences between the research findings and

typical readers and compare their reactions. Share similarities and differences between the reader's findings and the story in INTERRUPTING CHICKEN.

As a closing activity for this lesson, have students [create a class book](#) detailing non-fiction events in the life of a chicken and fiction events in the life of a chicken. Encourage students to share their work in an Author's Chair experience.

Telling a Story through Illustrating (Pre-K through Third Grade)

As a class or small group, examine the illustration in the story. Discuss how the illustrations tell a different story than the words do. Reread the story using only the illustrations. Discuss other wordless picture books such as CAT AND CHICKEN by Sara Varon or ROSIE'S WALK by Pat Hutchins. After studying the illustrations, have children work together in groups, or for younger students work together to create a story using only pictures. Talk about details in illustrating the pictures and how facial features, posture, colors, etc. signify emotions. Share the wordless picture books with younger students or in the school library.

Additional Resources and Activities:

[Candlewick's Read to Us! Story-Hour Kit](#)

This PDF guide provides additional ideas for INTERRUPTING CHICKEN, including having your students create a paper plate puppet for retelling and interrupting the story. The site also includes a reproducible "Bedtime for Papa" page for students to finish telling Little Chicken's bedtime story. These activities are designed to reinforce awareness of print, understanding of story parts, and retelling skills.

[David Ezra Stein's Website](#)

This website gives more information about the writer and links to the story and ideas to try, including a making a snappy book. This information can be used to complete an author study or to create the class book for Author's Chair activities detailed above.

[Chicken Life Cycle](#)

This website provides a simple overview to the life cycle of a chicken from egg to chick to chicken. The website also provides links to additional information about chickens. This information will be useful in beginning the guided research on non-fiction information about chickens.

Kathy Prater is a Reading Specialist and Pre-Kindergarten teacher in Starkville, Mississippi. She tutors students with dyslexia and teaches as an Adjunct Professor at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, Mississippi. Her passions include reading, writing, tending her flock of 15 chickens, and helping students at all levels to find motivation for lifelong reading and learning. She believes that every child can become a successful reader if given the right tools and encouragement.



WANT TO WRITE FOR ENGAGE? Send your name, the grade level(s) you teach, the title of book that you put to work, and a line or two about how you use it in your classroom to engage-membership@reading.org.

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James Sievert November 18, 2011 5:05 pm

Thanks for the ideas! Last year, our lower grades attended a children's theater production that blended together several famous fairy tales. The students loved it - I'm sure they'd like this too.
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