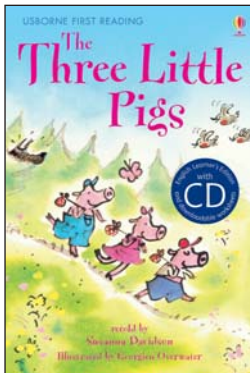


The Three Little Pigs • Teacher's notes



Author: Traditional, retold by Susanna Davidson

Reader level: Lower Intermediate

Word count: 516

Lexile level: 400L

Text type: English folk tale

About the story

The three little pigs, Pinky, Percy and Poppy, have grown too big for the little house where they live with their mother. They set out to build homes of their own, with some sound advice from Mother Pig: build strong, safe houses and watch out for the Big Bad Wolf. The wolf is never far behind as the pigs make their way in the world. First, Pinky builds a house of straw, then Percy builds a house of sticks, and finally Poppy builds a house of bricks. All the pigs are very pleased with their hard work and their new homes.

The wolf arrives at the straw house and asks to come in. When Pinky refuses, he huffs and puffs until the house blows down and Pinky runs to shelter in Percy's stick house. More huffing and puffing blows that down too, and both pigs take refuge in Poppy's brick house. No amount of huffing and puffing can blow her house down, so the wolf tries to jump in through the chimney. Luckily, the three pigs are ready. The Big Bad Wolf lands in Poppy's cooking pot, the pigs slam on the lid and that's the end of him.

The first written versions of the story appeared in England in the 1840s, but the story itself is thought to be much older. A very similar folktale from Dartmoor in south west England has three pixies living in a wooden house, a "stonen" house and an iron house. Both the wooden and stone houses are destroyed by a fox, but the iron house stands strong and the pixie is able to outwit the fox in the end.

About the author

Susanna Davidson has written over 50 books for children. She grew up in the Surrey countryside, in a strong brick house, surrounded by all kinds of animals, from parakeets and terrapins to rats, rabbits and snakes (no wolves, though). She now lives in London, writing about animals rather than living with them.



Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

p6	build	p46	slid
p7	wolf		chimney
p10	straw		cooking pot
p14	grand	p47	slammed
p15	sticks		lid
p22	bricks		
p32	just behind		
p45	cried [meaning "called out"]		
	roof		



Key phrases

p5	homes of our own
p6	to pack your bags
p7	Watch out for...
p8	to trot along/trot on
p21	At last
p27	the best of all
p29	not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin [phrase is specific to this story]
p30	to huff and puff to blow [something] in
p32	as fast as he could
p44	to run out of
p45	I'm coming to get you
p47	the end of [somebody or something]

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Before reading

You might like to collect pictures of animals and their homes, for example hen and hen house, rabbit and hutch, pig and pigsty, horse and stable. Note that some animals live mainly in the open, e.g. sheep and goats. Alternatively, do simple drawings of animal homes around the board.

Show students the pictures of homes, and see whether they can match them to the animal that lives there. You could make this a quiz activity and divide the class into teams.

Ask students what pigs' homes are like. These days there are often metal, semi-circular pigsties in open fields as well as stone, wooden and brick ones in farmyards. Why do pigs need homes? [Mostly for shelter from the cold and shade from the sun, but also for having their babies and keeping the piglets safe.] You could mention that mother pigs have between 5 and 14 piglets at a time (called a litter). The piglets grow to full size in three to four years.

Show students the book's cover. What are the three pigs carrying, and why? [Bundles of their belongings, to show that they are leaving home.] Can you see anyone else in the picture?

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|---|
| p3 | Do pigs normally live in houses like this?
Notice the bird family in the tree, and see if you can spot them throughout the book. | p28 | [Cement to hold the bricks together.]
Why is the wolf covered in bandages? Can you see how all his accidents happened? |
| pp8-9 | Can you see the wolf? Are the pigs watching out for him? | p29 | Would you let a wolf into your house? |
| p14 | What do you think of Pinky's house? | p30 | Is blowing normally a good way to get into someone's house? Does it work here? |
| p17 | How would you describe the wolf so far in this story? [Unlucky, clumsy, careless...] | p36 | Here, "he huffed and he puffed" is repeated. What does this tell you? |
| p18 | Do you think sticks are better than straw? | p44 | Why can't the wolf blow this house down? |
| p24 | Is it just bricks that make Poppy's house so strong? What's the white stuff in the bucket? | p47 | How do you think he's feeling by now?
How do the three little pigs feel at the end? |

After reading

Ask the students if they feel sorry for the wolf. What would he have done if he'd managed to reach the little pigs? Do they think the three pigs will be happy living together? What might Pinky and Percy do differently if they decide to build new houses for themselves?

The class may enjoy acting out the roles of the wolf and the pigs. Encourage them to think about the characters, and to add their own dialogue - why does Pinky use straw for his house, for example, is it because he wants to finish first or build quickly? Why would that be?

Did you know?

Most pigs have hardly any hair on their chins. It's possible that one early version of this story was about goats, who do have little beards. In folklore, beards are powerful and important symbols. Men would promise something on their beards. In this case, "Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin," is a way of saying, "No way!"

