

Planting Seeds of Reading: Exploring Gardens Through Stories

Materials Needed:

- An age-appropriate book about gardening (e.g., "The Tiny Seed" by Eric Carle, "Planting a Rainbow" by Lois Ehlert, or a simple non-fiction book about plants/seeds)
- Paper (plain and construction paper)
- Crayons or markers
- Optional: Small pot, soil, and a few easy-to-grow seeds (like beans or sunflowers)
- Optional: Index cards for vocabulary words

Lesson Activities:

1. Introduction: Sprouting Interest! (5 mins)

- Begin by talking about gardens. Ask: "What do you love most about gardening? What plants need to grow? Have you ever planted a seed?"
- Introduce the book you'll be reading. "Today, we're going to read a story about how plants grow, just like in a garden! Let's look at the cover. What do you think this story might be about?"

2. Reading the Story: Watering Our Minds (10-15 mins)

- Read the chosen book aloud together. Use expressive voices and point to the pictures.
- Pause occasionally to ask simple questions related to the pictures or text: "What is happening here?" "How do you think the seed feels?" "What do you see in this garden picture?"
- Pay attention to new vocabulary words related to gardening. When you encounter one (like 'seed', 'soil', 'sprout', 'bloom', 'roots'), pause briefly to explain it simply or ask the student what they think it means based on the picture/context.

3. Comprehension Check: Checking Our Growth (10 mins)

- After reading, discuss the story:
 - "Who was the main character in our story? (e.g., the tiny seed)"
 - "Where did the story mostly take place?"
 - "What was one of the first things that happened to the seed?"
 - "What happened next?"
 - "What happened near the end of the story?" (Focus on sequencing)
 - "What was your favorite part of the story? Why?"
- Review the new gardening vocabulary words. You can write them on index cards or draw simple pictures together. Ask the student to use each word in a sentence or explain what it means (e.g., "What is soil?" "What does a seed need to sprout?").

4. Activity: Creative Cultivation! (15-20 mins)

Choose one of these activities:

- **A. Story Sequencing Pictures:** Draw 3-4 simple boxes on a piece of paper. Ask the student to draw pictures showing the main events of the story in order (e.g., 1. Seed floating, 2. Seed landing on soil, 3. Plant sprouting, 4. Plant blooming). Help them label if needed.
- **B. My Garden Story Drawing:** Give the student paper and crayons/markers. Ask them to draw their favorite part of the story, or imagine their own garden and draw the plants growing. They can dictate a sentence about their drawing for you to write down.
- **C. *Optional Hands-On: Plant a Seed!** If you have the materials, guide the student through planting a seed in a small pot. Talk about each step as it relates to the story: "First, we need the soil, then we make a little hole for the seed, cover it up, and give it some water. Now

it needs sunshine to sprout!"

5. Wrap-up: Harvesting Our Learning (5 mins)

- Briefly review the story sequence and the new vocabulary words.
- Praise the student's effort and participation.
- Connect back to their interest: "Reading stories can teach us so much, even about things we love like gardening! Maybe we can read another garden book soon?"
- Display their drawing or place their newly planted seed in a sunny spot.