

Lesson Plan: Story Stones Adventure

Materials Needed

- Smooth, flat stones of various sizes (washed and dried)
 - Non-toxic, water-based acrylic paint pens suitable for children
 - A washable tablecloth or craft mat to protect the work surface
 - Paper towels or wet wipes for cleanup
 - (Optional) A small cloth bag to store the finished story stones
-

Learning Objectives (Ages 2-3)

- **Fine Motor Skills:** Oliver, Mila, and Reggie will practice their pincer grasp and hand-eye coordination by holding acrylic pens and making marks on the uneven surface of a stone.
- **Creativity & Expression:** Each child will decorate at least two stones, expressing themselves through colors, shapes, and scribbles.
- **Language Development:** The children will be encouraged to name the colors they are using and describe what they have drawn (e.g., "dot," "line," "Mila's stone"). They will participate in a simple group storytelling activity using their finished stones.

Alignment with Early Years Curriculum (EYFS Framework)

- **Physical Development:** Using one-handed tools and equipment.
 - **Expressive Arts and Design:** Exploring and using media and materials; creating with a purpose.
 - **Communication and Language:** Responding to simple questions and instructions; beginning to use language to express thoughts.
-

Lesson Procedure & Instructional Strategies

Part 1: The Warm-Up & Introduction (5 minutes)

Instructional Strategy: Sensory Exploration & Demonstration ("I do")

1. Gather Oliver, Mila, and Reggie around the covered craft table. Place the pile of clean stones in the center.
 2. Encourage them to touch and feel the stones. Ask simple questions: "Is the stone smooth or bumpy?" "Is it heavy or light?"
 3. Show them the acrylic pens. Say, "These are special pens for our stones." Pick up one pen, shake it (with the cap on), and uncap it.
 4. On a demonstration stone, draw a very simple design, like a smiley face or a sun. Talk out loud as you do it: "Look, I am pressing the pen down. I am making a yellow circle. Now two dots for eyes!" This models the process clearly.
-

Part 2: The Creative Activity (15-20 minutes)

Instructional Strategy: Guided Practice & Independent Exploration ("We do" & "You do")

1. Give each child a stone to start. Help them choose their first color.
2. **Guided Practice:** If needed, provide hand-over-hand assistance to help them press the pen tip down to get the paint flowing. Celebrate the first mark they make!
3. **Independent Exploration:** Let them take the lead. Encourage them to scribble, dot, and draw freely on their stones. Resist the urge to make it perfect; the goal is exploration.
4. Use encouraging language: "Oliver, I see you are making blue lines!" "Mila, you chose the red pen, what a beautiful color." "Reggie, look at all those dots you made!"
5. Allow them to switch stones and colors as their interest guides them. Set the finished stones aside to dry (acrylic pens dry very quickly, which is a major benefit for this age group).

Part 3: Storytelling & Sharing (5-10 minutes)

Instructional Strategy: Play-Based Learning & Scaffolding Language

1. Once the stones are dry, gather them in the middle of the table.
2. Pick up one stone and start a simple story. For example, hold up a stone with a yellow scribble: "Once upon a time, there was a bright, happy sun."
3. Pick up another stone, perhaps one Mila decorated. "The sun said hello to a little red ladybug." Point to Mila and ask, "Mila, what does the ladybug do?" Accept any answer, even a sound or a point.
4. Continue the story, incorporating each child's stone. Hold up Oliver's stone and ask, "Oliver, what is this?" If he says "car," you can add, "A blue car drove under the sun!" If he just points, you can say, "And here is Oliver's amazing blue squiggle!"
5. Let the children hold their stones as you tell the story together. This makes the connection between their creation and the narrative concrete.

Part 4: Closure & Clean-Up (5 minutes)

1. Announce that your story is over and it's time to clean up. Involve the children in putting the caps back on the pens (great for fine motor skills) and wiping the table.
2. Place all the finished Story Stones into the special cloth bag. Tell them, "We will keep our beautiful Story Stones in this bag so we can tell more stories another day!"

Assessment Methods (Formative & Informal)

- **Observation Checklist:**

- Did the child hold the pen with a developing grasp (e.g., full fist, pincer)?
- Did the child engage with the materials for at least 5-10 minutes?
- Did the child attempt to name a color or describe their drawing?
- Did the child participate in the storytelling part of the lesson (e.g., by pointing, making a sound, or saying a word)?

- **Artifacts:** The decorated stones serve as a tangible record of the child's creative work and motor skill application.

Differentiation & Inclusivity

- **For Extra Support:** Use larger, flatter stones that are easier to hold and draw on. Provide gentle hand-over-hand assistance to help with the motion of drawing. Focus on the sensory experience of making marks rather than creating a recognizable picture.
- **For an Advanced Challenge:** Encourage the child to draw a specific object they name (e.g., "Can you draw a flower?"). Ask them to find two stones and tell you a very short story about them (e.g., "The car goes to the house.").
- **Inclusivity:** The open-ended nature of the activity ensures there is no "right" or "wrong" way to participate. By using each child's stone in the final story, every contribution is validated and celebrated.