

A Year on Our Farm

By Penny Matthews

As the farm goes through the seasons of the year, this book shows through text and illustrations the changes and jobs around the farm each month. Delightfully illustrated by Andrew McLean, the book depicts life on the farm through the eyes of a child who lives there.



Shared Reading

Outcomes

Reads a wider range of texts on less familiar topics with increasing independence and understanding, making connections between own knowledge and experience and information in texts.

The children will be able to:

- ☆ Join in reading where they feel confident
- ☆ Make predictions about what might happen in the text
- ☆ Participate in discussion about the main points in the text
- ☆ Retell a story in the correct sequence
- ☆ Identify nouns
- ☆ Represent a story other than in print

Session One

Introducing the book

The first reading

A Year on our Farm by Penny Matthews & Andrew McLean

Introduce the parts of a book, such as the cover, title page and spine.

Show the children the cover. Show the children the title but don't read it. Show and name the author and illustrator.

Ask the children to predict from the cover and title-page illustration what they think the story might be about. List the predictions on the board or write them on a large piece of paper. What do the trees tell us about the story?

Introduce new vocabulary such as orchard, apricots, windbreaks, baling, crutching, yabbies.

Ask one child to come and point to where you will start reading and show which words you will read next.

Read the book to the end of the Summer January double page spread. Ask the children - What do you think might happen next? Read the book to the end of the Autumn March double page spread. Who are the main characters in the book so far? List them on the board. What do we learn about each character from the text and illustrations? Write suggestions under the appropriate name. For example, Mum and Dad pick fruit, Jess and the Narrator help - who is Jess and who is telling the story? Georgie eats the fruit.

What do you think might happen now? Do you think the book is written to a pattern? What do you think the pattern might be? Why?

Record the children's suggested seasonal pattern for the rest of the book. Under each heading ask them to predict what they think will happen on the farm for each month. This is recorded.

Read to the end of the book. Add more information about the characters to the list. Who is the narrator? When do we find out?

Return to the cover picture. The children read their predictions about the farm. Ask the children to take off the predictions that didn't happen and add the parts of the story that did.

In pairs, a season and corresponding month is chosen. For example, Autumn April. On paper the children illustrate what happens on the farm for their month. A caption is written underneath each picture. For example, Autumn May: Maria has three kittens! Display as a wall story around the room so that the children will be able to read the captions.

Session Two

Read the wall story about the farm with the children.

Ask the children to retell the story of *A Year on our Farm*.

Ask one child to come and point to where you will start reading and show which words you will read next.

Reread the story inviting the children to join in where they can. Use the oral cloze technique of pausing before certain words so that the children will say them. For example, The chooks don't lay much in _____ .

Stop at the end of the Summer January double page spread to discuss what it would be like to have an orchard. Stop at the end of the Autumn April double page spread to discuss what it would be like to milk a cow. Stop at the end of the Spring September double page spread to discuss what would be the best way to shear a sheep.

After reading, return to the text to discuss other words that could be used to describe, for example, the farm, planting trees in the rain, yabbies.

A simple story map. Ask the children what happened on the farm in each month. Record their responses on pieces of cardboard as simple illustrations. For example, Summer January - the orchard, Autumn March - rain on vegetables (cabbages and carrots). Ask individual children to come out and sequence the illustrated year on the farm.

The children retell the story from the pictures. Record the words on pieces of cardboard. For example, picking fruit in the orchard, planting cabbages and carrots. Ask individual children to come out and match the words to the pictures.

Session Three

Reread the wall story and sequence the words and pictures.
Reread 'A Year on our Farm', with the children's participation.

Ask the following questions to extend the children's understanding:

- ☆ Why do you think the family wanted to live on a farm?
- ☆ Where would you like to live? Why?
- ☆ How is living on a farm different/similar to where you live now?
- ☆ What would be the advantages and disadvantages of living in both places? These can be recorded and perhaps form the basis of a debate.

Show the children the double page spread which says *This is our Farm*. From the illustration ask the children to identify the different physical features that are a part of the farm. For example, the windmill, the dams, milking shed, shearing shed, the house, fences etc.

The children are each given an A3 sized piece of paper which they fold into four. On one half they write *The Farm* at the top, on the other they write *My Place*. Under each heading they write the physical features of each landscape. Illustrations are optional.

Discuss: How and why are they different? Similar? Display.

Session Four

Reread the wall story, reconstruct the story map and revise the landscapes.
Reread *A Year on our Farm*. Ask different children to take the role of the teacher by sharing the reading.

Ask the children to identify words in the book that are nouns.
Incorporate some of these words as part of a spelling list.

Session Five

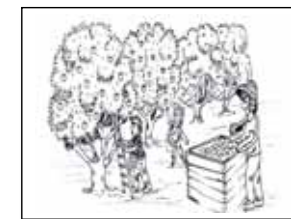
Reread the wall story, reconstruct the story map and revise the landscapes.
Reread *A Year on our Farm* with different children or groups of children reading a season and month. For example, Winter July. The groups can be changed around so that each group has a turn to read a different double page spread.



Visual Arts: 3D Collage

From the text, list the different jobs that are done in each season on the farm, eg.

Summer	Picking fruit Spreading hay Checking water troughs
Autumn	Planting vegetables Milking cows Looking after lambs
Winter	Mending fences Planting trees Crutching sheep
Spring	Shearing sheep Baling Hay Watering trees



Collage pictures of one or more of these jobs, using a variety of found and school resource materials. Label them clearly.



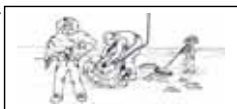
Music: Tone Colour, Structure

Children can create a song to the tune of *Here we go round the Mulberry Bush* and use the above phrases, one for each verse.

Use these words to save time:

1. *This is the way we pick the fruit, pick the fruit, pick the fruit,
This is the way we pick the fruit, on a Summer's day.*
2. *This is the way we spread the hay, spread the hay, spread the hay,
This is the way we spread the hay, on a Summer's day.*
3. *This is the way we check the water, check the water, check the water,
This is the way we check the water, on a Summer's day.*
4. *This is the way we plant the veges, plant the veges, plant the veges,
This is the way we plant the veges, on an Autumn day.*
5. *This is the way we milk the cows, milk the cows, milk the cows,
This is the way we milk the cows, on an Autumn day.*
6. *This is the way we look after lambs, look after lambs, look after lambs,
This is the way we look after lambs, on an Autumn day.*

7. *This is the way we mend the fences, mend the fences, mend the fences,
This is the way we mend the fences, on a Winter's day.*
8. *This is the way plant the trees, plant the trees, plant the trees
This is the way we plant the trees, on a Winter's day.*
9. *This is the way we crutch the sheep, crutch the sheep, crutch the sheep,
This is the way we crutch the sheep, on a Winter's day.*
10. *This is the way we shear the sheep, shear the sheep, shear the sheep,
This is the way we shear the sheep, on a bright Spring day.*
11. *This is the way we bale the hay, bale the hay, bale the hay,
This is the way we bale the hay, on a bright Spring day.*
12. *This is the way we water the trees, water the trees, water the trees,
This is the way we water the trees, on a bright Spring day.*



Add appropriate instruments to each verse to represent the job described in the verse.



Dance: Space, Action

Create rhythmic movements to the song from the music activity above, illustrating the lyrics. Develop this into a simple dance, eg.

- Line 1:* Step to the right in a circle making the movement in the lyrics,
Line 2: Step to the left, making the same movement
On a: Stand facing centre and show the different season with hands and body, eg.
- Summer:* Open hands, palms out in front of face, raise them and make a sun
Autumn: Sway hands from left to right as though in a wind
Winter: Make rain movements with hands
Spring: Make hands 'grow' from waist to face, then stretch into a sun shape.



Drama: Group Sculptures

Select one picture to present as a frozen picture. The pictures may be taken from the book or from the art works developed previously. Work out who will be which person, object or animal. Have one person sculpt the rest of the children to form a still representation of the picture.

Extension 1: Have the sculptor then touch each person on the shoulder and have the person tell what they are doing and what they are thinking (hot seating).



Visual Arts: 2D Drawing from Memory and from Observation

Examine the trees on the bottom left hand side of each double page.

How do these trees change?

What is happening to them as the book progresses, and why is this happening?

Take a walk outside and examine a tree, then draw it from observations. See if you can remember how it looked like during another season (obviously deciduous trees would be best for this activity, but even native trees register some changes, eg. grow flowers, flowers die, gumnuts, etc grow, new shoots appear, etc. Children may have to ask their parents or neighbours to help them remember how it looked eg. months ago.

Draw another version of the same tree, showing it in another season. Write about how it changes during the year.



Music: Structure

Have the children write their own words to fit a familiar tune.

Firstly, work out the rhythm of your selected tune.

Secondly compile a list of words appropriate to each season.

Finally, from this list, make up new words to the song, eg.

The following song has already been done for you: use it for the following activities:

Tune: *Are you sleeping?/ Frere Jacques*

Spring

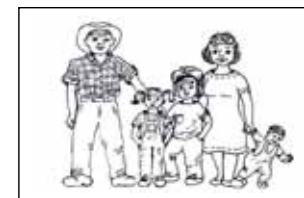
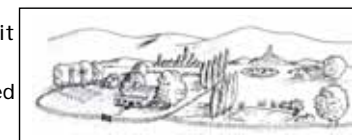
*Spring is coming, Spring is coming,
Warmer days warmer days.
Pitter patter raindrops, pitter patter raindrops,
Make things grow, make things grow.*

Summer

*Summer sunshine, Summer sunshine.
Scorching hot, scorching hot!
How I'd like a cool swim, how I'd like a cool swim,
What a dream! What a dream!*

Autumn

*Autumn's here now, Autumn's here now,
March, April, May, March, April, May.
Nights are growing colder, nights are growing colder,
Wrap up well, wrap up well.*



Winter

*Wearing warm clothes, wearing warm clothes,
Winter's here, Winter's here.
I have got the flu now, I have got the flu now,
Stay in bed! Stay in bed!*



Duration

Sing the song through with half the group clapping the beat, and the other half clapping the rhythm. Sing it through again, swapping groups.

Dynamics

Work out with the children which lines should be sung or said softly. Sing the song through, clapping the beat, showing differences between loud and soft lines.

Tone Colour

Experiment with different instruments to find suitable ones to represent events and descriptions in each verse. Sing the song through adding the instruments at the appropriate time.

Structure

When you are confident with singing the song, you can then sing it as a round, with one half of the group starting singing, then the second half of the group starting the song when the first half has sung the first line.



Drama: *Improvisation*

Divide into four groups and give each group one of the verses from the song.

Arrange groups side by side, Spring, Summer, Autumn then Winter. Each group creates a sequence of movements depicting one or more events appropriate to their season, as suggested by their verse. Then each group presents their season's movements as the previous group is finishing theirs. The finished effect could be like a wave, eg.

Spring: Some children are newly growing plants, others are the Spring rain

Summer: Children pretend they are enjoying the hot sun and swimming in the sea

Autumn: Several children are trees, others are leaves falling out at different intervals; wrap yourselves up in warm blankets

Winter: Be the cold wind blowing, put on warm clothes, catch the flu and stay in bed!

