



BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation

Read-A-Loud Books for Topics Related to Agriculture



This annotated bibliography is designed for elementary teachers to explore books related to agriculture with their students. Topics include farm animals, plants, farm machinery and farming around the world.

Subject Levels/ Suggested Grade

K-5 English Language Arts

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Grade and Subject	Curricular Competencies	Content Connections
English Language Arts K-5	<p>Use sources of information and prior knowledge to make meaning</p> <p>Use developmentally appropriate reading, listening, and viewing strategies to make meaning</p> <p>Explore foundational concepts of print, oral, and visual texts</p> <p>Engage actively as listeners, viewers, and readers, as appropriate, to develop understanding of self, identity, and community</p> <p>Use personal experience and knowledge to connect to stories and other texts to make meaning</p> <p>Apply a variety of thinking skills to gain meaning from texts</p> <p>Identify how differences in context, perspectives, and voice influence meaning in texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure of story • Forms, functions, and genres of text • Literary elements and devices • Text features • Vocabulary associated with texts • Perspective/point of view

Teacher Background

Rationale

Reading books related to agriculture is a wonderful way to introduce various topics related to agriculture and to allow discussions and questions. Young children like reading stories, and stories will engage them for a bigger classroom project as well. Some children have no experience with agriculture or food education; books provide them with a hook or sneak peek into an upcoming project/topic. Of course, to better understand agriculture and food education, reading a book only plays a part in the teaching. Hands-on work outdoors needs to follow to improve students understanding. This may include designing a school garden, participating in a school wide gardening program or participating in a BC Agriculture in the Classroom program (i.e. Spuds in Tubs).

The target audience for this annotated bibliography is for elementary school classroom teachers and support teachers. Most children love read-a-loud and picture books. Hopefully, this resource would provide teachers with a starting point for which books they may consider using for their own read-a-louds. This annotated bibliography for teachers may also be useful for supporting teachers such as teacher librarians, resource and ELL teachers (like me!) who do not have their own classroom but are supporting students learning. They may use these books to complement the classroom teacher's food education project while also diving into important aspects of literacy.

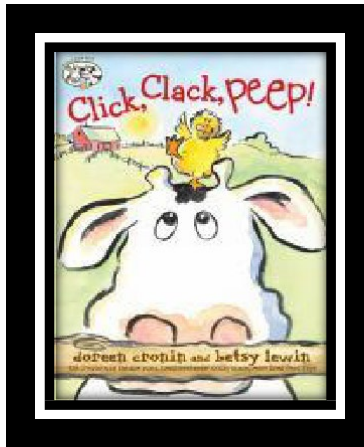


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Cronin, D., & Lewin, B. (2015). *Click, Clack, Peep!*. New York: Atheneum Books for Young Readers.

Summary

Click, Clack, Peep! is a humorous story about anthropomorphized farm animals that attempt to put a baby chick to sleep. All the animals cannot get the chick to sleep until a duck comes up with a plan. The duck rocks the chick to sleep while driving in a tractor. The story ends with the farmer waking up to see his farm with various tractor track marks all over his farm and a sleeping duck and chick.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Students come up with another ridiculous way of getting the chick to fall asleep. Students can write an explanation for why this method would work for getting the chick to fall asleep.
- 2) Research and see if you would be interested in inviting “Poultry in Motion” come teach your students more about poultry through their “Educational Mini Barn.” More information can be found here: <http://bcchicken.ca/consumer/poultry-in-motion/>



Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Dickmann, N. (2011). *Farm Machines*. Chicago, Ill.: Heinemann Library.

Summary

Farm Machines is a short informational text that provides information regarding the different types and uses of farm machines. This book is more suited for early primary readers and provide lots of pictures for students to draw text to picture connections. If this book is not used as a read- a-loud, it is easy enough that students could use it for buddy/partner reading.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) What are some of the uses of the farm machines?
- 2) Why are there different machines to do different things on the farm?
- 3) The wheels on the farm machines are very big and jagged. Why might this be?



Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Fullerton, A. (2016). *When the Rain Comes*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada: Pajama Press Inc.

Summary

When the Rain Comes is about a young girl, Malini, and her family's rice farm in Sri Lanka. Malini is given an important task of transporting the rice seeds, which her family will use on their farms, for the next growing season. Unfortunately, a big rainstorm ruins her plan of a smooth trip and risks ruining the rice seedlings. She eventually finds shelter for her seedlings, reunites with her family and is met with a happy ending. The language used in this book is very descriptive.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Create 2 columns labelled sight and sound. Have students notice what descriptive words are used to describe these two senses in the book.
- 2) Write a diary entry as Malini, describing 3 things that happened in the story.

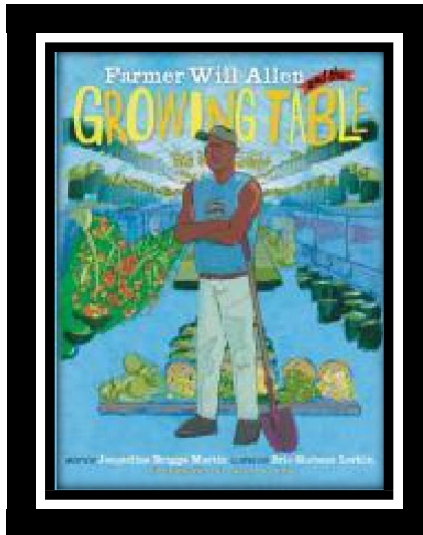


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Martin, J. B. (2013). *Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table*. Bellevue, Washington: Readers To Eaters.

Summary

Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table is a story about Will Allen's life. The story discusses his start as a professional basketball player and when he starts his own urban farm in Milwaukee. His farm expands and eventually becomes a big city farm called "Growing Power" which also provides educational services for those that want to learn more about urban farming. This book would be more suitable for intermediate elementary students due to the vocabulary.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Why did Will Allen not like farming as a kid?
- 2) Why are red wiggler worms important?
- 3) What is food security? Why is it important?

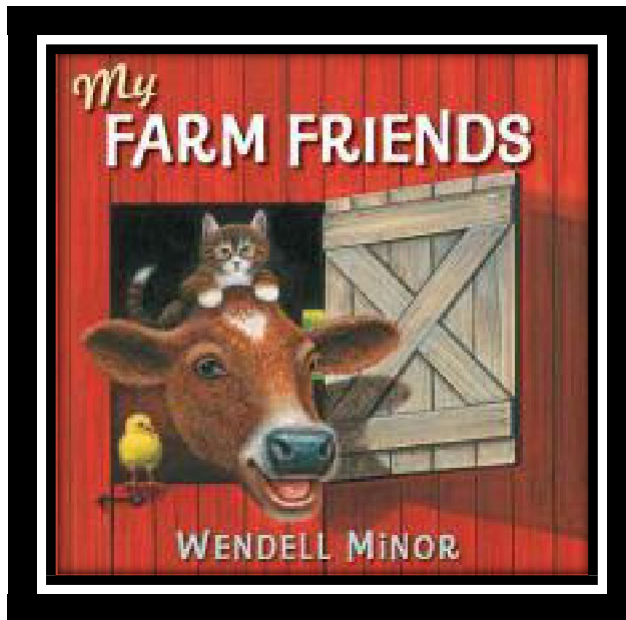


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Minor, W. (2011). *My Farm Friends*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons

Summary

My Farm Friends introduces 10 farm animals: cows, pigs, chickens, sheep, goats, roosters, cats, chicks, horses and turkeys. The life-like drawings and illustrations make it visually appealing. The book introduces various facts related to each animal. The amount of words per page and ginormous illustrations make it easier to read for early primary students.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) What animals did we see in the story that we usually do not see every day?
- 2) Why do you think we do not always see these animals in the city?
- 3) Which is your favourite farm animal? Why?

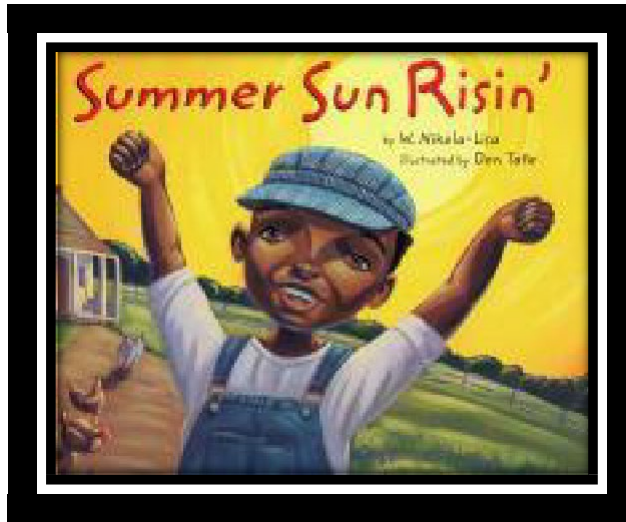


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Nikola-Lisa, W. (2002). *Summer Sun Risin'*. New York: Lee & Low Books.

Summary

Summer Sun Risin' is a book made up of separate stanzas of a poem describing life on the family farm; the book starts with describing the beginning of the day at the farm with a sunrise and till the end of the day at the farm when everyone goes to sleep. We see the farm throughout the day through the eyes of a young boy. Some activities he participates in include having breakfast with the family, tending the cows, and mowing the hay fields. The stanzas are in an ABCB rhyme scheme.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) What are some of the farm activities we see in the book?
- 2) What rhyme scheme are the stanzas written in?
- 3) How is your life similar or different from the boy in the story?

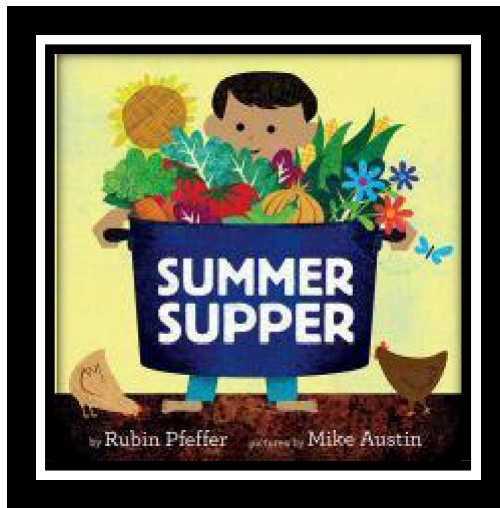


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Pfeffer. R. (2018). *Summer Supper*. New York: Random House.

Summary

Summer Supper is an easy to read book set at a family farm. The book goes through the cycle in farming, from the planting process to the harvesting and cooking of the produce. The words in the book all begin with S. This book would be a good read-a-loud for late primary and early intermediate elementary school classes; some of the “s” words may be difficult for some students and may require teacher guidance.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Brainstorm “S” letter words related to sounds (i.e. onomatopoeia), prior to reading the book. Pick out “S” onomatopoeia words in the story and have students create their own 8- page book filled with “S” onomatopoeia sounds showing the planting, harvesting and cooking of food.
- 2) Students draw a detailed picture with 10 hidden drawings of “S” letter words. Students present pictures to classmates to try to find all 10 “S” sound pictures.

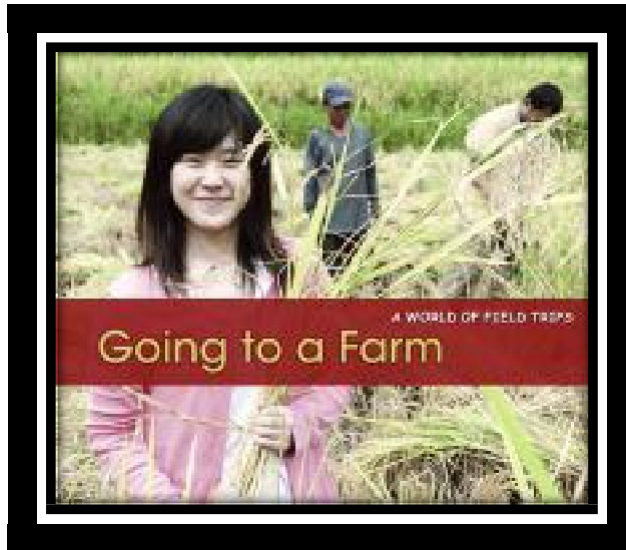


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Rissman, R. (2012). *A World of Field Trips: Going to a Farm*. Chicago, Ill: Heinemann Library.

Summary

Going to a Farm is an informational book introducing the different types of farms and their products. This book is an easy read suitable for early primary students; the book would be a good introduction before going on a field trip to a farm. *Going to a Farm* uses real life pictures and features farms in what looks like different parts of the world.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) What kind of farm is this? Is this farm local?
- 2) What are some things you need to remember when going on a field trip to a farm?
- 3) Why is it important to have different types of farms?

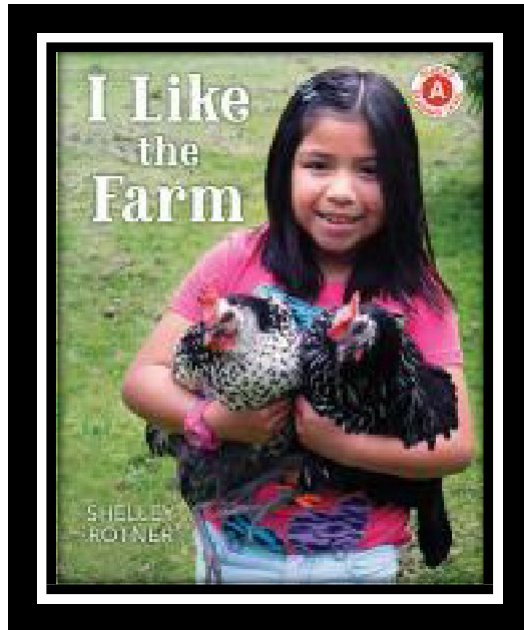


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Rotner, S. (2017). *I Like the Farm*. New York: Holiday House.

Summary

I Like the Farm is an easy to read pattern book that would be useful for small group guided reading for students that struggle to read. The book showcases different animals on the farm with each page beginning with the words, “I like the...”. The book has real life pictures of different animals on the farm and hence would also be useful for ELL learners.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) What is your favourite animal? Why?
- 2) Have you seen these animals in your home country? (For recently immigrated ELL students)
- 3) Who has visited a farm before? What was it like?

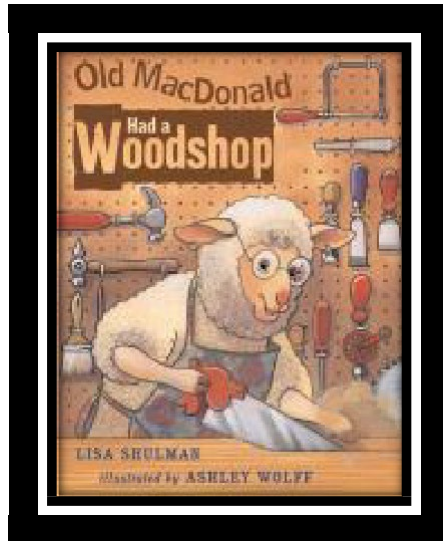


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Shulman, L. (2002). *Old MacDonald Had a Woodshop*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Summary

Old MacDonald had a Woodshop is about Old MacDonald, an anthropomorphized sheep, who uses various tools to create a special project which is later revealed to be a mini barn model.

Each animal on the farm supplies Old MacDonald with a different tool. The story pages are written in the same fashion as the “Old MacDonald” nursery rhyme, except the words and sounds have been changed to be about tools and the sounds they make. This book could be useful for early primary classes and for teachers who enjoy incorporating singing into their class.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Read the book and parts of the book in the tune of “Old MacDonald.” Students can hold up pictures of the tools during the corresponding part of the song.
- 2) Picture Matching Worksheet: students match the different tool pictures with the associated word to learn meaning of the different words (for early primary students).

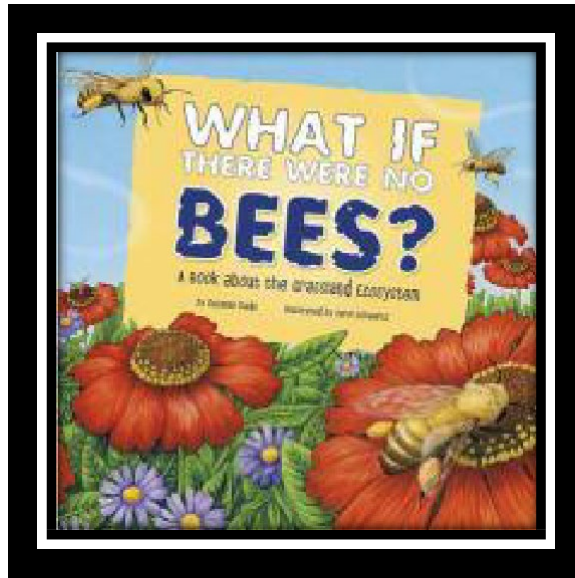


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Slade, S., & Schwartz, C. (2011). *What if there were no bees?: A book about the grassland ecosystem*. Mankato, MN: Picture Window Books.

Summary

What If There Were No Bees? is an informational book describing the importance of bees in our ecosystem. There are useful diagrams depicting how bees influence different animals and plants and ultimately play a crucial part in maintaining our ecosystems. There are also some fun facts about bees presented on some pages. At the end of the book, the author discusses some things we can do to help the bees.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Draw your own graphic organizer/diagram explaining how bees impact the food chain.
- 2) Imagine bees no longer existed. List 5 things that would be impacted because of this change. Think about how these things impact us. Share your thoughts with a partner.

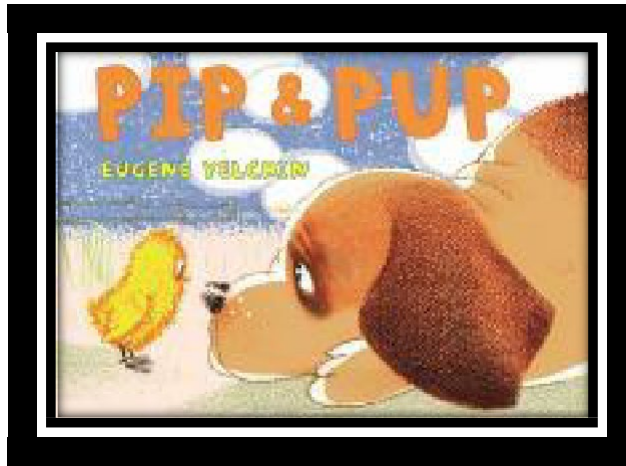


Photo Retrieved from the Vancouver Public Library Online Catalogue

Yelchin, E. (2018). *Pip & Pup*. New York: Godwin Books/Henry Holt and Company.

Summary

Pip and Pup is a wordless picture book about Pip, a chick, who later befriends, Pup, a dog on a barnyard. Pip is originally frightened by Pup but through a rainstorm, they learn that they can support one another and become good friends. The book also provides an opportunity to discuss some social-emotional learning concepts, such as the importance of getting to know someone before judging or assuming their personality. This book would also be great for ELL students given the lower amount of words and higher amount of interpretation required.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Pick a page from the book. There is no text. What might you pick as the caption/paragraph for this page?
- 2) How do you think Pip and Pup were feeling during the rainstorm? What clues in the picture support your answer?



Photo Retrieved from amazon.ca

Spencer, S. & McNamara, M. (2020). *The Bug Girl*. Penguin Random House Tundra Books.

Summary

A delightfully illustrated book about a little girl who loves bugs. Sophia loves sharing all about bugs until grade one, when she discovers that everyone does not share her love for bugs and she is bullied. She stops talking about bugs and her mom, noticing how sad she is, writes to an entomological society looking for a bug-loving pen pal for her. There are many enthusiastic responses that come flooding in for Sophia (#BugsR4Girls), and her love for bugs is renewed! There are facts about bugs at the back of the book as well.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Choose a bug mentioned in the book, and research where it lives, what it eats and how it impacts agriculture.
- 2) Complete BCAITC Invent a Bug Lesson (<https://www.bcaitc.ca/resources/invent-bug>).

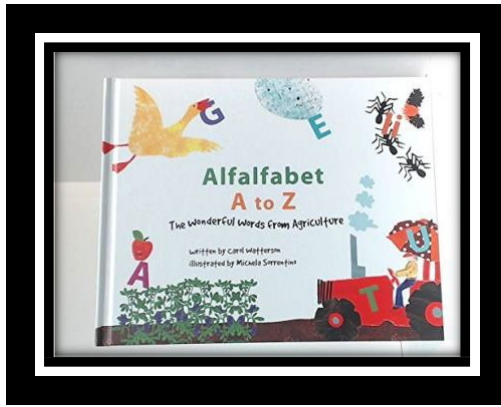


Photo Retrieved from the Amazon Canada Website

Watterson, C., Sorrentino, M., & British Columbia Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation. (2009). *Alfabet A to Z: The wonderful words from agriculture*. Abbotsford, B.C: British Columbia Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.

Summary

The *Alfabet A to Z* is a great book for primary and lower intermediate elementary school students. As the title suggests, the book introduces words related to agriculture starting from A to Z. The illustrations are very colourful and pleasing to look at. There are sometimes a few paragraphs per page in the book for each letter so it may be wise to introduce a few letters for each read-a-loud rather than attempting to finish the whole book. For older students, teachers may use this book for examples of alliteration for their poetry unit; the page titles are featured using alliteration. One can also purchase the book through the BC Agriculture for the Classroom website.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) Brainstorm more words related to agriculture for each of the introduced letters.
Have students arrange those words in alphabetical order.
- 2) Create an acrostic poem for the word “agriculture.”



Photo Retrieved from BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation Staff Files

Waterson, C., Sorrentino M., and BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation. (2015). *A Cow's Tale*. Abbotsford, BC: BC Agriculture in the Classroom Foundation.

Summary

A Cow's Tale is a fictional picture book about Please, a dairy calf who takes readers on a tour of all aspects of dairy farms in BC. From a day in the life of a calf, to cow nutrition, to the milking parlour, this interactive resource is a great accompaniment to the +milk program provided by BCAITC. Each chapter contains story, activity, and fact sections with a mix of illustration and photography set around dairy farming. *A Cow's Tale* is available to download for free on the BC Agriculture for the Classroom website.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) What does a dairy farmer do in a day?
- 2) How does Please the dairy calf spend time on the farm?
- 3) Take a tour of a dairy farm with your class to see the farm in action. Draw a picture of one thing you saw on your trip and send it as a thank you letter to the farmer.
- 4) If a tour is not an option for your school, consider having a visit from the "Mobile Dairy Classroom". More information can be found here:

<https://bcdairy.ca/dairyfarmers/dairyclassroom>



Photo Retrieved from <https://www.littlegreenthumbs.org/resources/>

Vivid Communication. (2017). *Alex's First Seed*. NL: Newfoundland Labrador: Agriculture in the Classroom.

Summary

Alex's First Seed is a fictional picture book about Alex, an earthworm, and how he learns about the process of creating compost and the earthworm's role in providing nutrients for vegetables to grow. This book would be good as part of a book set related to agriculture where primary students can buddy read with older intermediate students. There is a list of fun facts about worms near the back of the book.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) The class starts their own compost project. Students draw a picture of the food waste for every few days, making notes about the any changes they notice.
- 2) Create a KWL for composting. Discuss what the students think and know about worms.
- 3) Why do some of us think worms are gross? How are worms important for our ecosystem?



Photo Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/littlegrnthumbs/status/1055112204398280704>

Vivid Communication. (2018). *Blossom's Big Job*. NL: Newfoundland Labrador: Agriculture in the Classroom NL.

Summary

Blossom's Big Job is a fictional picture book about Blossom, a hard-working bee that is given a job to pollinate orange flowers which later turn out to be pumpkins. The morale of the story is that Blossom needs to work hard and be patient to accomplish the task. In the end, Blossom is very satisfied with her contribution. This book would be a fun book to compliment a bee unit; it provides some background information regarding bees through an amusing story. The back of the book also includes interesting facts about bees. *Blossom's Big Job* is available to order for free on the BC Agriculture for the Classroom website.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) How did Blossom feel when she first saw that her flowers did not grow into a fruit or vegetable?
- 2) What fruit/vegetable do you think the orange flower will bloom into?
- 3) Share a time when you had to work hard for something.

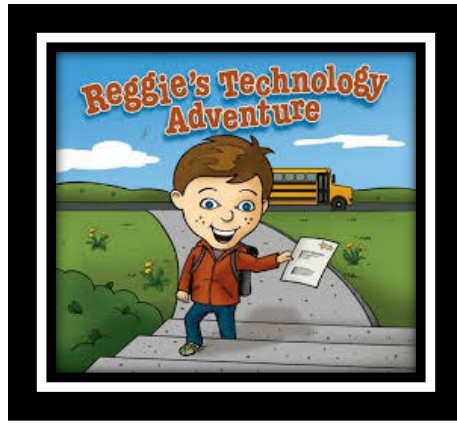


Photo retrieved from BC Agriculture in the Classroom Staff files

Vivid Communication. (2019). *Reggie's Technology Adventure*. NL: Newfoundland Labrador: Agriculture in the Classroom NL.

Summary

Reggie's Technology Adventure is a fictional picture book about Reggie, a boy who is initially upset with his assignment on technology in agriculture, but upon taking several farm tours with his mom, becomes fascinated and enjoys completing the project. Reggie explores a dairy farm's milking equipment, examines egg conveyors, washers, and shell testers, and exclaims with delight over the use of drones to monitor crop production. The back of the book also includes interesting facts about how technology is used in agriculture production across Canada. *Reggie's Technology Adventure* is available to order for free on the BC Agriculture for the Classroom website.

Discussion Questions or Activity Suggestions

- 1) How did Reggie feel when he was assigned his project topic? Does he change his mind?
- 2) What do you think Reggie's favourite piece of technology was?
- 3) Can you think of other technologies that are used on farms?

Credit

Flanagan, C. (2010, January/February). Cultivating Failure: How School Gardens are Cheating our Most Vulnerable Students, *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2010/01/cultivating-failure/307819/>

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