This language arts unit for second-graders emphasizes active participation to stimulate the pupils' interest in and ability to communicate imaginatively and effectively in both oral and written forms. Activities in creative drama, choric interpretation, film viewing, storytelling, pantomime, poetry reading, and music listening are recommended to develop in children sensory perception, interpretive and manipulative skills, sensitivity to environment, self-confidence, and creative expression. Included are a bibliography of professional books and periodicals, lists of verse for both teachers and children, and lists of stories and folk tales. (JM)
KIDACTION

Creative Experiences
In
Language Arts

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My purpose in writing this unit is to develop the creative experience of my boys and girls in the second grade so that they will be able to communicate with others with confidence and pleasure.

Our industrial civilization with its assembly production has never encouraged creativity. Even in our schools we have been content with simple right answers to our stereotyped questions. Independent thinking and nonconformity have been discouraged.

In this fast moving world of the space age we teachers know that the minds of the children of today must meet the challenge of their world tomorrow.

There is no finality to knowledge, as facts are constantly changing and discoveries are rapidly being made. A child must be trained to formulate new theories and sustain and promote the inventive minds that are causing the rapid changes in our lives today. This demands hypothetical or creative thinking.

The language arts program with its humanizing factor can provide both the climate and method that will foster creativity.

In all forms of language the interpretive arts are the most natural channels for the outpouring of the child's thinking, for relating himself to the world and communicating his understanding and feelings to others. The teacher must encourage this.

Such activities as creative drama, choric interpretations, storytelling and T. V. viewing provide ways to expand the communication skills and creative responses. They are ways of developing the creativity that is a means as well as a major aim of language arts. They open to the child the opportunity to think and respond creatively in live situations and motivate him to share and communicate his ideas.

Experiences in creative drama are based on real life situations with its beauty and conflicts and leads the child to an understanding of himself, others and the world around him. A child can relate well only when he is doing something interesting, satisfying and fun. These experiences are also therapeutic for as a child pantomimes, he may find release for his emotional tension in an acceptable way.

Choric interpretation is not only an interesting and challenging method of performance but also a valuable and flexible teaching device.
Its main purpose is communication. It implies an awareness of the writing as a work of literature. The interpreter must use his mind, voice and body for total effect. He must communicate the intention of the writer.

Choral speaking helps a child find meaning and mood in a poem and heightens his appreciation of beauty in language. His language can be improved by the "hearing--saying" process. He finds a need to listen carefully to be able to respond creatively.

Often a child's complete emotional comprehension of a poem or story comes at a nonverbal level. Acting out creatively in pantomime permits free expression of his response, thus deepening his experiences and preventing frustrations.

The focus of creative arts is on active child participation which gives him richer and more varied experiences, making more effective the teaching of communication skills.
CREATIVE EXPERIENCES
IN
LANGUAGE ARTS

Overall Goals

Cognitive
To demonstrate by application sufficient knowledge of communication
skills for his grade level.

Affective
To prove by behavior patterns that his basic growth needs for the
development of the whole child are met satisfactorily to him in his
unfolding world.

Psychomotor
To show by activities performed a growing control of large muscles.

Specific Objectives

Cognitive

1. When given a story to read he will be able to retell it in
   sequential order and answer such questions as "Who speaks
   first? What happened next?"

2. When given instructions he can give correct responses.
   After listening to a story he can by pantomime or tableau
describe the characters or scenery.
3. He can tell original stories.
4. He can converse with his friends or teacher without signs of embarrassment. Original oral story telling.
5. He can give directions so clearly to others that they can follow them correctly.
6. He will be able to write a letter and communicate his ideas.
7. He will be able to write an original story.
8. He will by application (oral and written) show his knowledge of new words in grade level vocabulary.

Affective

1. By behavior patterns he demonstrates his pleasure in listening and reading.
2. By playing well with others he shows his love of people.
3. By dancing or jumping or other movements he responds to music.
4. By using his senses he becomes pleasantly aware of the world.
5. When confronted with a social or personal problem he solves it to his satisfaction.
6. He will pursue his interests by reading books and drawing pictures related to that interest.

Psychomotor

1. When walking around the room he does not stumble or fall.
2. When interpreting music or stories his movements are graceful.
3. When using overhead projector, record player or tape recorder his movements are careful and deliberate.
4. When writing or painting he shows good control of muscles.
Approach

Fundamental to the problem of the language arts curriculum is the improvement of the child's ability to communicate through the effective use of words in both oral and written forms. Equally important to the program are the stimulation of his imagination and enrichment of his perception by which he becomes aware of the world around him.

We know that children learn better and are more motivated if the learning situation is pleasant and they are allowed to participate.

Television viewing and interpretive arts, pantomime, creative drama, choric interpretation, choral reading and story telling will be used in this unit to help develop the creativity that is a means as well as a major aim in this unit.
Creative Drama

1. A Purpose: To develop an appreciation for the beauty around him. To motivate oral and written expression.

Material: Idea, Record "Danse Macabre"

Method: As children look at a flower or something equally as beautiful, they may talk about the beautiful things they see. Lead them to tell how they feel when they see beautiful things. Each child draws a large picture of "The Most Beautiful Thing I Can Think Of." When he finishes he describes his picture.

Follow Up Activities: After children have shared their ideas of beauty, they may express themselves as big bad giants tramping through the world causing one kind of trouble, destroying beauty, as the record "Danse Macabre" is played. The teacher, "The Great Giant of the Sky," then commands each one to report his doings. In loud voices the giants call across the world and report their deeds of destruction to the beautiful things. After all of this they will want to become good giants and rectify their misdeeds.

Evaluation: The teacher might ask, "Are giants always big creatures that destroy beautiful things?" Let them think of the many ways beauty is destroyed such as by people, insects, storms. Then she might ask, "Did you see a giant destroying something beautiful around your home? Tell us about it. How did it make you feel?"
2. A Purpose:

To motivate oral and written expression.
To develop imagination.

Material:

A dandelion in seed
Poem, "I Keep Three Wishes Ready" by Annette Wynne

Method:

The teacher may read, "I Keep Three Wishes Ready" by Annette Wynne. This poem and a fluffy white dandelion in seed will create the mood for wishing. The teacher then says after she blows on the head of the dandelion, "If the seed flies to the fairies, your wish comes true, but if it gets caught in a tree the fairies never know what you wished for. All my wishes have been caught in trees, but I keep wishing." She guides them into rhythmic movements by asking, "Would you be happy if the fairies brought you this?" and pretends to bounce a ball or ride a scooter, etc. Then each child pretends to pick a dandelion and makes a secret wish. Pretend it comes true as soon as the faraway fairies sound wishing music. The children stand in a big ring as round as a giant dandelion seed and make their wish. The teacher plays the record "Fairies" as the children express their wishes in action.

Follow Up Activities:

Teacher may say, "Today you may have three wishes. Number 1. You may have any story book character to spend the day with you. Number 2. You may go any place you care to go. Number 3. You may have any thing to eat. Write a story about how you will spend the day."
Choric Interpretation

3. A Purpose:
   To make literature come alive.
   To train the voice and diction.
   To learn to work together.
   To give the shy child confidence.

Material:
Poem, "The Mouse's House" by Pat Day

Method:
Step 1. Teacher reads poem. Discuss and analyze.
       Pool discoveries.
Step 2. Know meaning of every word in relation to the whole poem and the poet's use of it.
Step 3. The focus of discussion should be on lines of poem and poet's experience.
Step 4. Read in unison several times until all are fully acquainted with entire selection.
Step 5. Then the students, after the analysis, begin to use their voices and bodies to communicate using gestures that describe the object itself or simply indicate the way that object or poet's attitude toward it makes them feel. Voice classification is only a relative matter in the primary grades and is usually "boys" and "girls" unless there may be an unusual voice.

Follow Up Activities and Evaluation:
Each child finds a poem to read to the class.
Let him choose one that he likes, one with combination of sounds which feel good to his mouth and one in which he can make the words come alive.
Film Viewing
Story Telling

Purpose:
To set the stage for creative expression.
To help the child interpret human behavior.

Material:
Film, "The Hunter in the Forest"
A story without words

Method:
Before the film is shown the teacher may say,
"This film is different from the films we usually see. This is a story without words. How will you know what is happening?" When the children understand that they are to respond to pictures and not voices, show the film. After the film the children tell about it or ask questions that are answered by the children themselves. You may ask if they thought it was a good title. After the children have finished talking about it and have told the story they perhaps may want to see the film again and see if they can discover any other ideas for themselves. Then the teacher may ask if there are any other ways that they could go hunting. She may make a list of these as the children tell her.

Evaluation:
Each child writes a story of his adventure as a hunter telling what he hunts, where he goes and what he finds.
Story Telling

4. Purpose: To motivate imagination.
   To improve story telling.

   Material: Pictures in sequence or from a comic strip,
             such as "Peanuts" for each child.

   Method: Children tell a story picture by picture.
           Teacher may ask, "What could have happened before
           the first picture? What might happen after the
           last picture?"

   Follow Up Activities: The teacher may read an illustrated story.
                       After they have heard the story let them re-
                       construct it using the pictures to help.

   Evaluation: Children may find, make or take with camera,
               their own pictures to illustrate a story they
               will write.
Story Telling

5. **Purpose:**
   To provide students with opportunity to perceive a pattern in the plots of narratives. To give practice in recognition of similarities and differences in plot and meaning among the selections.

**Materials:**
Folk Tales, "Little Red Riding Hood," "Three Little Pigs" and "The Story of the Three Bears."

**Method:**
Establish background by discussing other folk tales such as "The Gingerbread Boy" or "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." Suggest they listen for new things such as new endings for old stories. After the story is told, ask questions to make them aware of plot structure of most folk tales as the child or creature leaves a happy home, wanders out and meets a monster after which he is eaten or returns to his happy home. Also let them discover there must be an evil character and a good one. Let their discussion bring out how the stories are similar and dissimilar.

**Follow Up Activities:**
Figures representing the secure home, the spooky forest or monster might be placed on the flannel board to illustrate the plot motif of the stories. The children could construct similar figures for the flannelgram and tell stories about figures within the same plot pattern. Let them understand that monsters may be feelings too.

**Evaluation:**
The class chooses another child and writes a story about what happens when he meets another monster. Let them share their stories. Suggest that they write a story about Red Riding Hood going to her grandmother's but meeting no monster. Each child may write about his own adventure in which he meets a monster.
6. Purpose:
To introduce the child to conflict.
To develop a sense of awareness.
To stimulate creative rhythmic movement.

Material:
Poem, "The Elf Singing" by William Allingham

Method:
Teacher pretends to search for something. When every child is curious she may say, "Where in the world did that little elf go? Will you all see if you can find him and bring him over to our circle?" There will be questions and discussion about an elf until everyone is sure he knows what an elf is. Be sure they have the concept of his size. The teacher may read, "The Elf Singing," by William Allingham. Discuss the good and evil pattern. Reread and let children read the warnings to the elf.

Follow Up Activities:
Children dramatize poem. They make up a song for the elf.

Evaluation:
Each child writes a story about himself and an evil character, following the conflict pattern.
Pantomime

7. **Purpose:**
   To strengthen his sensory perception.
   To help remove inhibitions.
   To develop self-confidence.
   To motivate oral and written expression.

**Material:**
Idea

**Method:**
Teacher may ask, "Do you know Red Skelton?"
Let them discuss freely his programs, what he does, how he does it, etc. Then she may ask "Does he ever tell you anything without talking? How?" Let them discover for themselves as they talk that a good mime must show who he is, where he is and how he feels about what he is doing. Then the teacher may ask, "What one thing did you do this summer that you wish you were doing now?" Let each child show by pantomime what he did, keeping in mind the who, what and how idea.

**Follow Up Activities:**
The child may write a story about one thing he liked about his vacation.

**Evaluation:**
As each child reads his story the others pantomime remembering the qualities of a good mime.
Pantomime

8. Purpose: To develop creative expression.
   To recognize different levels of interpretation of stories.

Material: Book, Whistle for Willie
          Film, Whistle for Willie by Weston Wood

Method: The teacher may introduce the book by saying, "Our story today is about a little boy who has a problem. As we read listen carefully and see if we can find it." Let them discuss the story, making certain that by your questions they make their own discoveries and answer their own questions.

Follow Up Activities: Show this delightful film, Whistle for Willie. If they care to pantomime as the film is shown, it will deepen their experience. When the film is finished the teacher may ask, "What is the most important thing in the film? Can you think of one way in which you are like this little boy?" They will soon think of something that was hard for them to learn to do.

Evaluation: Children may write about themselves learning to do some difficult thing. They may make a play and dramatize it.
9. **Purpose:**
   To develop interpretive skills.
   To motivate oral and written expression.

**Material:**
- Book, *Five Chinese Brothers*
- Film, *Five Chinese Brothers* by Weston Wood

**Method:**
The teacher may introduce the book by saying, "Our story today is about five brothers. As I read you may listen and see if you can think how they are alike and how they are different." Let the children discuss the story, answer their own questions and make their own discoveries.

**Follow Up Activities:**
Show the film, *Five Chinese Brothers*. The film is taken from the book and there are many pictures of the brothers that make interesting tableaux. The children will like to do this. After the film you may ask questions such as, "What does this film mean to you?" They may have many different ideas. Accept all of them. Some may think of what disobedience can do. Others may suggest that different people can do different things.

**Evaluation:**
The children may make tableaux of their own from other stories they have read and take pictures of them. They may want to draw the Five Chinese Brothers.
10. **Purpose:** To develop creative expression. To develop manipulative skills.

**Material:** Polaroid Camera, Film

**Method:** The children take each other's pictures as they go about their daily duties or play during a typical school day.

**Follow Up Activities:** Make captions for the picture that he was responsible for. Put on the bulletin board.

**Evaluation:** Each child can explain to his mother or the principal the story of the bulletin board.
11. A  

Purpose:  To develop awareness through the senses.  
To motivate oral communication.  

Material:  Poem, "Mud" by Polly Boyden  

Method:  Teacher may ask such questions as, "What do  
you like to have touch your hands?, Feet?, Body?"  
After children have shared pleasant touches the  
teacher may read "Mud" by Polly Boyden.  For  
further stimulation such questions as, "What  
have you touched that makes you feel like being  
kind?  What have you touched that made you  
shiver?" and others answered by sense of touch.  
The children close their eyes and hold out  
their hands as the teacher touches them with a  
variety of objects each with a different surface.  
These may be a clothes brush, a cockle burr,  
an inflated balloon, a sprinkle of salt, a  
puff of air, a piece of soft fur or cold wet  
macaroni.  Let them express the feelings each  
one gives them.  

Follow Up  
Activities:  Children make a bulletin board, "Things I Like  
to Touch and Things I Don't Like to Touch."  

Evaluation:  The children may like to write a story, "What  
I Like to Feel on the Farm."
12. A Purpose: To develop awareness through senses.

(An ancient Persian poet emphasized the need for beauty in living when he said: "If thou has two pennies, spend one for bread; with the other buy hyacinths for thy soul.") An exciting way for children to gather hyacinths is through sensory awareness.

Method: The teacher may ask an awareness question at the close of the day or week depending on group. A child's thinking and awareness are sharpened by limiting his expression to a single word or thought. When the child returns the next morn he shares his "hyacinths" by writing or drawing his idea.

Questions may be asked that stimulate awareness, such as, "What was the biggest thing you saw this week? What do you see when you look up in the sky? What do you see when you look out your bedroom window? What is your favorite smell? If you could make a sandwich and put three things in it, what would you choose?"
"Seeing Picture People"

Tall people, short people
Thin people, fat
Lady so dainty
Wearing a hat
Straight people, dumpy people
Man dressed in brown
Baby in a buggy
This makes a town.

Unknown

Read this poem slowly once. Have children make a large drawing of one person they remembered. Put them all on the bulletin board to see if the town is complete.
13. Purpose: To develop an awareness of environment.
   To develop appreciation and creative expression.

Material: Poem, "Happy Thought"

"Happy Thought"

The world is so full
Of a number of things,
I'm sure we should all be
As happy as kings.

--Robert Louis Stevenson

Method: Teacher reads poem and asks, "Are you happy?
Are kings happy?" Discuss what happiness is.
Let children have a mailbox for the "King of the
World." A large carton can be used to collect
their creations of stories or pictures of things
that make them happy. Make it easy for a shy
child to express himself by suggesting that each
contribution be marked whether it is to be
shared with the kingdom or kept in confidence
for the king alone.
14. A Purpose: To develop awareness of the world around him.
To develop a sense of the rhythm of nature—i.e., seasons.
To develop body control.
To develop oral expression.

Time: First Snow

Material: Poem, "What Is White?" by Mary O'Neil

Method: Without any introduction the teacher may say,
"Silently, softly and swiftly
It falls to the earth and lies
In heaps and drifts and hummocks
A wintertime surprise."
Then she adds, "What am I talking about?
Don't tell me, show me." After they have
watched the snowflakes and expressed themselves
in rhythmic action the teacher may ask, "What
else is white?" After the children share their
impressions which may be "White tennis shoes"
"Sugar" or "Paste pasting paper," the teacher
may read the poem, "What Is White?" by Mary
O'Neil.
15. **Purpose:** To help children become at ease when talking to a group.

**Material:** Tape recorder

**Method:** The teacher starts a story with a sentence such as, "Once upon a time there was a little old man." Each child takes his turn at the tape recorder adding clearly one sentence of his own until the story is finished. Play the whole tape back and let children evaluate themselves.

**Follow Up Activities:** Children may write own story using teacher's first sentence.
The following are ideas just to tickle your imagination. Use them in your own creative way.

1. Pantomime action words such as scamper, slither, glide, snicker, etc.

2. Write and pantomime sentences of their own, using new words.

3. Pantomime sentences showing different meaning of words pronounced the same but spelled differently as, "We went to town. I have two balls, and Bill has a new cap and I have one too."

4. Using poetry, children show their feelings with movement. Read the poem, "Cat" by Mary Britton Miller. Children act as mimes. Later they may paint cats in any pose and write cat stories.

5. Read a poem with soft background music to set a mood for children's interpretation of their true feeling. Read "Sea Shell" by Amy Lowell to create a mood about the sea that brings descriptive words into the child's thinking and stretches his imagination. As each child listens to a shell he hears its secret. He writes the secret that the shell tells him, then records it on the tape recorder which is in another room. After all have done this, they play it to the group.

6. Read poetry to release tension and create a freedom of movement. Read "The Elephant" by Herbert Asquith.

7. Recording. Play "Valse Serenade" Rhythmic Activities Album Number 455001. Let the music tell children what to do.

8. Recording. Play "March in F" Rhythmic Activities Album Number 455001. Ask the children, "What story does the music tell you? What do you see?"

9. Ask, "What would be a good adventure for you today?" Response can be varied—oral, written, paint.

10. Paint with words, the first picture that comes to their minds when they hear a single word. Some words may be shoes, party, red, present.

11. Make much use of "Reader's Theatre" or "Interpreter's Theater." As one child reads a story others interpret what is read by pantomime.

12. Keep a "Poetry Drawer" for your favorite poems. Let the children bring the ones they like to add to your collection.
"A Leprechaun is of more value to the Earth than is a Prime Minister."
James Stephens

"Wear your imaginary 'scarf of beautiful sunshine' and you will find a 'fairy message' on the window sill and be off to make-believe forests gathering 'raspberry caps' wearing 'cowslip slippers' stringing 'shell necklaces' wearing cobweb capes to fairyland."
Unknown

"Guide children to create with feeling rather than to imitate with exactness.
To know is nothing at all.
To imagine is everything."
Anotole France

"Our chief want in life is for someone who can make us do what we are capable of doing."
Ralph Waldo Emerson
"The Elephant"
   Herbert Asquith

"The Sea Shell"
   Amy Lowell

"Cat"
   Mary Britton Miller

"Bunches of Grapes"
   Walter de la Mare

"See With Your Fingers"
   Harry Sartain

"The Squirrel"
   Unknown

"Night"
   Sara Teasdale

"Swift Things Are Beautiful"
   Coatsworth

"Merry-Go-Round"
   Dorothy Baruch

"Fog"
   Carl Sandburg

"Some One"
   Walter de la Mare

"Whistles"
   Unknown

"Last Word of a Bluebird"
   Robert Frost
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McEwen, Catherine Schaefer, *Away We Go*

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"Raggedy Man," James Witcomb Riley, Rhymes of Childhood
"Setting the Table," Dorothy Aldis, Any Spring
" Skipping Ropes," Dorothy Aldis, Everything and Anything
"The Sun," John Drinkwater, All About Me
"Sweet and Low," Alfred Tennyson, The Princess
"Three Lovely Holes," Winifred Welles, Skipping Along Alone
"Wings and Wheels," Nancy Byrd Turner, In Feather and Fur
"Animal Store," Rachel Field, Taxis and Toadstools
"A Bird," Emily Dickinson, The Poems of Emily Dickinson
"The Bird's Nest," John Drinkwater, All About Me
"The City Mouse and the Garden Mouse," Rossetti, Sing-Song
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"The Duck," Edith King, Fifty New Poems for Children
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Fairies and Make-Believe

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"Me," Walter de la Mare, Bells and Grass

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Stories in Verse

"Hiawatha's Childhood," Longfellow

"A Visit from Mr. Fox," Old Folk Rhyme

"Paul Revere's Ride, Longfellow, Tales of Wayside Inn
"Star Bright, Starlight"
"Yankee Doodle Went To Town"
"One Misty, Moisty Morning"
"God Bless The Master Of This House"
"I Had A Little Pony"
"A Cat Came Fiddling Out Of A Barn"
"Little King Boggen, He Built A Fine Hall"
"Intry, Mintry, Cutry, Corn"
"Little Nancy Etticoat"
"This Is The House That Jack Built"
"Old Mother Hubbard"
Stories for Children

Folk Tales

Drakesbill

The Elves and the Shoemaker
The Farmer's Old Horse
Jack and the Beanstalk
The Lad Went to the North Wind
Lazy Jack
The Lion and the Mouse
The Three Little Pigs
The Traveling Musicians
Why the Bear is Stumpy Tailed

Legends and Hero Tales

The Apple and the Arrow, Mary Buff
Pecos Bill Teaches the Cowboys to Play, J. C. Bowman

Modern Make-Believe Stories

The Lion Hearted Kitten, Peggy Bacon
Little Toot, Hardie Gramatky
A Tall Tale from the High Hills, Ellis Credle
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Grade 2
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