
FOX ON THE JOB

Author: James Marshall

Publisher: Dial Books for Young Readers

THEME:

There are many jobs in the world and you have to try a few to find the one that's right for you.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

Fox tries to earn the money for a new bicycle in several different jobs. He learns that jobs are hard to come by and sometimes he can't be so lazy.

In exploring the world of work, LeVar shares his list of household chores. He also interviews a young man who has started his own business, a dog walker who manages to walk more than one dog at a time, an architect who designs large Lego® displays, and a police officer who works on horseback.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

Invite students to share stories about opportunities they have had to earn money outside of their regular household chores.

Discuss Fox's different jobs in the story. What happened at each job that caused him to have to leave? Why was Fox so successful at his last job?

Ask students why people need or want jobs. How do people use the money they earn in their jobs? Are there other reasons for wanting a job besides earning money? Invite students to tell why they personally might be saving money.

Discuss attributes that are needed in order to obtain and keep a job, e.g., being on time, dependability, doing good work, getting along with others on the job, etc.

It appeared from the program that the Lego® artist had a job that was more "play" than "work." Discuss other jobs in which people play at their work.

CURRICULUM EXTENSION ACTIVITIES:

Brainstorm a list of all the careers that students can think of. Have each student select a career that is most interesting to her/him to research. In addition to print resources, have them conduct an interview, write a letter, or use e-mail to ask questions about the career. As a group, generate a short list of questions they would like to have answered—questions that would be appropriate across all their chosen careers. Have each student start with this master list of questions and add one to it that is unique to the career she/he is researching. Provide an opportunity for students to share their findings and

encourage them to be creative in their sharing (e.g., dramatize a person in that job at work, make a poster about the career, write a biography of someone in that job, dress up as someone in that career and tell about her/his work, etc.).

Have a career fair in the classroom. Invite parents and others in to give brief presentations about their jobs. Those who cannot come in person could send a videotape of their presentation.

Bring in lots of Legos® and have students make Lego® creations.

Have students think of (or invent) careers that would be fun to have, such as ice cream taster, creator of new ice cream flavors or candy bars, someone who decides on new colors for crayons, t-shirt designer, creator of new board games, someone who plays with puppies or kittens, etc. Give each student a sheet to complete as follows:

I am a _____.

At my job, I _____.

Here is a picture of me at work.

Bind all the pages into a class book entitled, "Jobs We Would Like to Have."

Fox got a job at a pizza parlour, a shoe store, a haunted house, and a furniture store. Have students write "Help Wanted" ads for those jobs. Look at newspaper ads for ideas about the kinds of information that appear in ads of this type.

Have students, working in small groups, design a business. They will need to decide on the type of business they will have (e.g. Is it a service or will they have a product?), what jobs the workers will have, how they will advertise, where they will sell products (if there is one), what they will charge, and the like. Have them write advertisements for their business and design a business card. Provide opportunities for each group to share its business and explain why it is needed.

There are several books in the "Fox" series, including *Fox All Week*, *Fox and His Friends*, *Fox In Love*, *Fox On Wheels*, *Fox At School*, *Fox On Stage*, and *Fox Outfoxed*. Obtain some of these books to read to the class and make them available for students to read on their own. Discuss the characterization of Fox. As a class, write another story starring Fox. Take dictation of the students' ideas for the rough draft, edit the story together, and then put individual sentences from the story on sheets of paper for students to illustrate. Have them make a cover, title page, and dedication page, as well. Bind the pages into a book for the classroom library or put it on "loan" for a short while to the school library and ask the media specialist to shelve it with the other "Fox" books.

Students will likely notice that many of the “Fox” books were written by Edward Marshall. In reality, Edward Marshall and James Marshall were the same person. Allow students to speculate as to why James invented Edward as the author.

RELATED THEMES:

economics
working to earn things we want
humorous stories

RELATED READING RAINBOW PROGRAMS:

Program #1 — Tight Times

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Best known for his series of books featuring the popular characters George and Martha, Viola Swamp, and the Stupids, James Marshall’s cartoon style of art and his subtle use of humorous detail have made his books immediately recognizable to children. James Marshall’s work has been featured on previous **Reading Rainbow** programs: *Nosey Mrs. Rat*, *Miss Nelson Is Back*, *The Piggy in the Puddle*, *Space Case*, and *Three by the Sea*.

BOOKS REVIEWED BY CHILDREN:

PIG PIG GETS A JOB
by David McPhail (Dial)

MUSIC, MUSIC FOR EVERYONE
by Vera B. Williams (William Morrow)

HELPING OUT
by George Ancona (Houghton Mifflin)

SUPPLEMENTARY BOOKLIST:

JOBS FOR KIDS: A GUIDE FOR HAVING FUN AND MAKING MONEY
by Carol Barkin, illus. by Roy Doty (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)

LEO AND EMILY’S ZOO
by Franz Brandenburg, illus. by Yossi Abolafia (Greenwillow)

ARTHUR’S PET BUSINESS
by Marc Brown (Joy Street/Little, Brown)

A JOB FOR WITTILDA
by Caralyn & Mark Buehner (Dial Books)

A DAY’S WORK
by Eve Bunting, illus. by Ronald Himler (Clarion)

MARTIN AND THE TOOTH FAIRY
by Bernice Chardiet & Grace Maccarone, illus. by G. Brian Karas (Scholastic)

CRANBERRY AUTUMN
by Wendie and Harry Devlin (Four Winds)

ARTHUR’S FUNNY MONEY
by Lillian Hoban (HarperCollins)

YUMMERS TOO: THE SECOND COURSE
by James Marshall (Houghton Mifflin)

THE PAPERBOY
by Dav Pilkey (Orchard Books)

MAMA BEAR
by Chyng Feng Sun, illus. by Lolly Robinson (Houghton Mifflin)

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