



AUTHOR STUDY

Lessons based on the works and life of Jan Brett

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Jan Brett Author Study

Getting Started

Choosing to do an author study with your child or student is a great way to introduce them to a new way of looking at literature and can help them better appreciate the books they read. It can also be fun for you, too, as you learn new things about authors and get to read many more books! 😊

Before you begin...

- Gather some information about the author you're going to be studying together. Have some websites on-hand (most authors have their own) and do some research for yourself so you have some background knowledge.
- Make a list of all the books you want to use in your unit. Some are listed in the lessons for you, but you'll want to have more on-hand just for leisure read-alouds as well. Decide which (if any) books you want to buy and which ones you'll gather from the library.
- Read through the lessons and know what you'll need to print ahead of time. Make sure you print enough journal pages and any of the "extras" you'll want to use.
- You may want to have your student's journal or culminating project bound at the local office store, so plan ahead for that if you choose.

Jan Brett Author Study

Lesson 1: Sequencing & Making Predictions

A. Introduce The Mitten and read with student.

**Whenever you introduce a new book or author, follow this format:*

- *Point out and read the title, author, illustrator, and publication information to the student. Continue to do so with each book until he/she is able to point them out to you. This is how we get information about a book and it's important for the student to know where to find it!*
- *Conduct a "picture walk" through the book – flip through the book and look at the pictures. Make predictions about what you think will happen in the story. Make some comments and allow the student to comment on the illustrations, as well.*
- *Read the book to the student. Ask for a summary from the student and allow him/her to use the book to help retell.*
- *If reading another book in the same author study, point out the similarities in the author's style in multiple books.*

After reading *The Mitten*, close the book and see if your student can name the animals that crawled into the mitten in order. (It is not expected after just one reading.) Read the book again and this time, see if your student can PREDICT what animal comes next before you turn each page. (If they catch on to the clues in the borders, great! If not, point it out after a couple page turns.)

Complete a sequencing activity with animal cut-outs or puppets from the story. (There are cut-outs available at www.janbrett.com!) Make a mitten out of construction paper and have your student write or draw what they would fit in their HUGE mitten.

The next 2 lessons are parts of this first lesson on sequencing. It is not recommended to do them all in one day. Allow one day for each book, or simply only do one book from this lesson if you're short on time.

As the first lesson in this unit, do a little research on the author. (We will do more in-depth research later.) Visit <http://www.janbrett.com/index.html> to get to know the author we'll be studying over the next few lessons.

Jan Brett Author Study

Lesson 1: Sequencing & Making Predictions

B. Introduce The Hat and read with student.

As you read with your student, see if he/she can figure out what animal is coming next in the story based on looking at the borders.

Point out Jan Brett's use of borders not only to give a hint at what's coming on the next page, but also to tell another story within the story—you can see what the other characters are doing, even though she doesn't write about it. Can you tell what's going to happen at the end of the story by looking at the TOP border? Ask your student what he/she thinks is happening to the clothes that were hanging up!

Students can create and design a colorful hat out of construction paper and art supplies—designed however they'd like!

Complete a journal page on this book.

Jan Brett Author Study

Lesson 1: Sequencing & Making Predictions

C. Introduce The Umbrella and read with student.

Follow the same format with The Umbrella as with the previous two stories. Practice making predictions while reading the story.

As a follow-up craft, make a colorful umbrella by taking a coffee filter and painting it. Then insert a pipe-cleaner in the center as the umbrella's handle. You can find cut-outs of the animal characters at www.janbrett.com and use those to paste them in the umbrella in the order they appear in the story.

Jan Brett Author Study

Lesson 2: Fairy Tales

Several of Jan Brett's books are rewrites of familiar fairy tales. This is a great opportunity to talk about the elements of a fairy tale and work on compare/contrast skills!

For each of the stories listed, read the original story first (I love the "early readers" versions put out by Scholastic) then read Jan Brett's version. Complete the "elements of a fairy tale" worksheet and "compare and contrast" worksheet for each story. The student may complete a journal page for any of the stories they especially enjoyed.

I've listed the original stories on the left and Jan Brett's titles on the right. Some stories have more than one corresponding Jan Brett book!

- A. The Gingerbread Man – Gingerbread Baby/Gingerbread Friends
(Great opportunity to make gingerbread cookies!)
- B. Goldilocks and the Three Bears – Goldilocks and the Three Bears/The Three Snowbears/The Mermaid
- C. Cinderella – Cinders
- D. Beauty and the Beast – Beauty and the Beast

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Lesson 3: Settings & International Stories

Jan Brett travels a lot and the places she visits often inspire her next book. Not only does she beautifully capture the unique setting of each place, but sometimes she retells a folktale from that region. For each of the books listed, pay attention to the beautiful artwork of the SETTING. After reading all the books (or as many of the ones you want) from the list, complete the settings activities in the included packet. A journal entry may also be completed for any one of these books.

- A. The Mitten (Ukraine)
- B. Honey Honey Lion (Botswana)
- C. Daisy Comes Home (China)
- D. The Turnip (Russia)
- E. The Umbrella (Rainforest)

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Lesson 4: Author Review & Culminating Project

You can find information on Jan Brett from her website and complete the author review page at the end of the writing journal.

Because we focused on the elements of a fairy tale for a good portion of this unit, have your student retell a familiar fairy tale for the culminating project. You can type or write it out for him/her and then he/she can do the illustrations with water colors. Be sure to include “borders” in your book so it follows the Jan Brett style. Talk about what to include in the borders.

Another option is to simply re-write The Mitten using different animals. Then you already have an easy-to-follow template to use.

If writing a story isn't your student's “thing”, write a letter to Jan Brett herself! Or choose any one of her MANY activities on her website to continue the fun!