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Activity Guide

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The Easter Egg Farm

ABOUT THE STORY

Pauline, Mrs. Pennywort's hen, is very unusual: she lays eggs with colors and designs that look like the things she sees. When the eggs hatch, different colored chicks pop out, and those chicks grow up and lay colored eggs themselves. Finally, Mrs. Pennywort's farm becomes the Easter Egg Farm.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

A successful author of novels and picture books, Mary Jane Auch grew up on a farm where she was surrounded by chickens. Ms. Auch majored in art at Skidmore College and did textile design in New York City. She now lives with her family on a farm near Rochester, NY.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to explain how Easter eggs differ from ordinary eggs. Have them describe the way they have decorated Easter eggs or seen Easter eggs decorated. Then tell them that the book they will read is about a hen that lays Easter eggs that are decorated in a very unusual manner.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "How many hens lived in Mrs. Pennywort's hen house?"
- "Which of the hens didn't lay an egg every day?"
- "Why couldn't she lay every day?"
- "What did Pauline's first egg look like?" (*Sequence of events*)
- "What did the fourth egg look like?" (*Sequence of events*)

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard. Ask volunteers to define each word. Then have children create two words webs for the words, one with the word "chickens" in the center circle, and one with the word "Easter eggs" in the center. Children can add other descriptive words to the webs.

squabbled	cackled	fantastic	creative	craft
fluffed	hatched	clucked	design	

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Art: Make Easter Eggs

Provide children with hardboiled eggs and crayons to decorate on the eggs. Allow them to draw their own designs on the eggs, based on what they see around them or outside. Then help them to dip the eggs in colored water to dye them. Display children's eggs around the classroom.

Social Studies: Easter in Other Countries

Point out to children that Easter is celebrated in many countries around the world. Ask children to investigate how Easter is celebrated in one of these countries: Italy, Brazil, Israel, Greece, or Mexico. Allow children to choose another country if they want. Have them write down and report on special foods, costumes, and traditions associated with Easter in the country they have chosen.

Art: Leonardo da Vinci

One of Pauline's inspirations is the painting Mona Lisa, by Leonardo da Vinci. Children can look at other works by da Vinci in art books or books about artists. Encourage children to talk about the paintings, their style, and which ones they like and why.

Art: The Ballet

Pauline and Mrs. Pennywort go to the ballet. Have children look at books about the ballet, and if possible, show them a short video of a ballet. Explain that ballet is a dance form that became popular in the nineteenth century and is still popular today. Any children who have taken ballet classes can explain and demonstrate some of the movements to the class.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Easter Eggs

Have children use the keywords Easter eggs to look for interesting examples of Easter egg art on the Internet. Children can print out examples of their favorite eggs to display in the classroom.