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Activity Guide

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Umbrella

ABOUT THE STORY

Three-year old Momo is given an umbrella for her birthday. As she anxiously waits for a rainy day, she devises several excuses to use the umbrella. But mother tells her to wait for the rain, and when it finally comes, Momo is thrilled.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Jun Atsushi Iwamatsu (Taro Yashima) based his children's books on childhood experiences. His first book for children, *The Village Tree* was published in 1953. Yashima has received several awards for his colorful illustrations and simple, delicate prose. His books *Crow Boy* (1956), *Umbrella* (1958), and *Seashore Story* (1967) were all Caldecott Honor Books. Mr. Yashima has twice been awarded the Southern California Council on Literature of Children and Young People Award, and in 1974 he was chosen as the recipient of the University of Southern Mississippi's Silver Medallion.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask the group to think of gifts they were excited to receive but had to wait a period of time before being able to use or play with them. How did that make them feel? Relate their experiences to that of Momo, and explain that she must wait for a special type of day before she can use her birthday present.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- Where was Momo born? (New York City)
- Where are her parents from? (Japan)
- What does Momo mean in Japanese? (the peach)
- What other gift did she receive with the umbrella? (boots)
- Why did Momo want to use her umbrella on a sunny day? (to keep the sun out of her eyes)
- What did the sound of the raindrops on her umbrella remind Momo of? (wonderful music)
- What did Momo also do for the first time on the day she used her umbrella for the first time? (walked without holding her parent's hand)

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard and review their meanings. Then ask volunteers to use the words in sentences.

Japan	umbrella	midnight	unfortunately	nursery
Indian summer	answer	impatient	excited	whispered
strangely	splendid	unhappy	wakened	pavement

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Searching for Syllables

Review the meaning of a syllable with the group. Point out that the word "umbrella" has three syllables. Have students work in pairs to find all of the three-syllable words in the story. Compare lists with other pairs.

Social Studies/Geography: Where in the World?

Bring students to the library and have them use atlases to locate Japan on a map. What continent is it on? How big is it compared to the United States? To Canada? What countries neighbor Japan?

Social Studies/World Cultures/Reference Skills: Like a Peach

The author tells us that in the Japanese language Momo means "the peach". Using foreign language picture dictionaries, give students a list of other words to look up.

Art: Amazing Umbrellas

Provide each student with a large piece of oak tag cut to resemble an umbrella, some tissue paper, glue, and crayons or markers. Have students rip the tissue paper and use it to decorate the umbrella collage-style. Use markers or crayons to add detail. Display around classroom.

Language Arts: Say it Again

Write the following four scrambled sentences on the board. Have volunteers think back to the story and rewrite the words in the proper order.

- umbrella my I need
- rainy let's a it keep day for
- face did Momo stop not wash to her
- day the all rain stop not did long
- wind bother must eyes my the

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.

Umbrella

Have students search to find out more about the umbrella. Who invented it? When? How did they get the idea for it? What sorts of designs do umbrellas come in?

Taro Yashima

Do an author study on this interesting author. What other books has he written? Where did his ideas come from? Is he still alive? Why does he use a different name?