Early Childhood Lesson Plan
for
Zack’s Alligator by Shirley Mozelle

Name of Activities: Vowel “CHOMP” Game
Alligator Song

Students Participating: size of group:
Children, any size group; partners

Lesson Goal: Learners will practice the short “a” vowel sound by playing the Vowel “CHOMP” Game and learn basic alligator facts through a song with motions.

Learning Objectives/Skills: The learners will be able to:
a) Actively listen to a story and participate in a group discussion before and after
b) Recognize the short “a” vowel sound in words
c) Identify alligator facts in the “Alligator Song” by singing with class

Environmental Adaptations, Time and Materials Needed: These activities can be adapted to almost any environment. Children will need a flat surface (table, tray, floor) on which to play the vowel game with a partner. The activities will take approximately 25-30 minutes, depending on students. The following materials will be needed:
- A copy of Zack’s Alligator, by Shirely Mozelle
- Alligator Template Page (one for each student)
- Sets of fish cards cut apart (one set for every two students)
- Sets of fish cards for each student to take home (which they can color and cut apart on their own)
- “Alligator Song” (copies for each student to take home)
- Brown paper bags (one for each student)
- Gluesticks / Elmer’s Glue
- Safety scissors
- Optional: coloring supplies (crayons, markers, colored pencils)
- Optional: Blank fish cards for students to write their own words

Procedure/Description of the Activity:

1. Gather children and seat them for story time. Introduce the book, Zack’s Alligator, by Shirley Mozelle to students. Before reading the book, ask students what vowel sound they hear in the word, “Zack.” Students should recognize the short “a” sound. Have students identify the short “a” vowel sound at the beginning of “alligator” and distinguish between the short and long “a” sound they hear in the word. While reading the book, have students look for words where they hear the short “a” vowel sound, as it will be an important part of a game they will play!

2. Read Zack’s Alligator to the group. Ask students questions throughout the story to encourage them to make predictions and be active listeners. For example: What do you think Zack will find in the box? Do you think Zack is afraid of Bridget? Why or why not? Do you think Zack will bring Bridget to school the next day? Also, highlight some of the words that have the short “a” sound and have students repeat them with you.
3. After reading the book, ask students some follow-up questions about the story. For example, “Do you think Zack will take Bridget to school the next day?” or “Do you think Zack’s parents know that Bridget can grow? Why do you think so?”

4. Next, explain to students that they are going to play a game that will help them practice finding the short “a” sounds in words. Each student will color an Alligator Page, cut it out, and glue it on a brown paper bag. Students will then play the game in pairs, each with their own alligator bag. To play the game, each pair will receive a set of fish cards with words; cut apart (These cards have words from the book, some of which are high frequency words).

Have students lay all the cards face down on a flat surface (floor, desk, or table) so they cannot see the words. Explain to students that the alligators on their bags will only eat fish that have words with a short “a” vowel sound. Each student will take a turn picking a fish card out of the pond and reading the word aloud. If the student picks a word with a short “a” vowel sound, they say, “CHOMP!” and put the card in their alligator bag. If they don’t hear the short “a” sound in the word, they leave the fish in the pond with the word facing up. The game is over when the students’ alligators have eaten all the short “a” words (Note: Students can continue playing the game looking for other vowel sounds they have learned, such as long “a” or short “i” sounds). Praise children for their cooperation and efforts while playing the game.

5. When students have finished playing the Vowel “CHOMP” Game, have them gather as a group on the floor. Go through the fish cards with students and have them say the words together aloud. If the students hear the short “a” sound, then they will make an alligator mouth with their arms and say “CHOMP!” as they clap their arms and hands closed. Praise students for their correct answers and following directions so well. If there is confusion about a word, repeat the word and highlight the vowel sound for them so they can identify it correctly.

6. Give each student a packet of fish cards to take home and cut apart. Students can then color them and practice playing the game with their family.

7. Conclude the lesson by teaching students the “Alligator Song” and the accompanying hand motions. Ask students to share some facts they know about alligators. Explain to students that alligators live in swamps and hatch from eggs. Ask students, “In the book, Zack’s Alligator, do you remember where Bridget said she lived?” Talk about the Everglades being a place where alligators live. This will be a fun way for students to learn some simple facts about alligators after reading the fictional story about Bridget the alligator.

8. Students can take a copy of the “Alligator Song” home with them to sing and share with their family.
### Assessment:

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<th>Objective</th>
<th>Participants’ Names</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Actively listen to a story and participates in group discussion</td>
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<td>b) Recognize the short “a” vowel sound in words during vowel game and discussion</td>
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<td>c) Identify alligator facts in “Alligator Song” by singing with class</td>
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### Reflect on the Activity:

1. What worked well?
2. What didn’t work?
3. What might have made the activity more successful?
4. Did you notice any potential for follow-up activities based on what the students said or did?

**Transfer Home/Extension Ideas:**
- a) Write additional words on the blank fish cards provided to practice other vowel sounds and play the game. Students can think of their own words to include in the game, as well.
- b) Students can identify different vowel sounds they hear in the “Alligator Song” in addition to the short “a” sound.
- c) Read non-fiction books about alligators and have students investigate how real alligators behave and eat compared to Bridget in the book.
- d) Read *Zack’s Alligator Goes to School*.

### Literacy Area(s)* Addressed (check all that apply):

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* from National Center for Family Literacy’s *Building Strong Readers* and *Learning to Read and Write*