

## ARTSEDGE Lessons for Elementary School

# Making Rain

How do cultures around the world “make” and celebrate rain?

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## Overview

### Summary

Rain is needed everywhere for life. In this lesson, students experience rain through a hands-on auditory activity, a science experiment, an award-winning children’s picture book, poetry reading and writing, song and chant, and an instrument-making activity.

### Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Simulate the sound of rain
- Make rain in a controlled environment
- Learn about the need for rain for life
- Experience different cultures through song and literature
- Create a rainstick
- Reflect on the sensory experience through poetry

### Teaching Approach

Arts Integration

### Teaching Methods

- Experiential Learning
- Simulations and Games
- Guided Listening
- Guided Practice
- Visual Instruction

### Assessment Type

Performance Assessment

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### Key Staff

Classroom Teacher

### Key Skills

**Making Art:** Producing, Executing and Performing  
**Global Connections:** Connecting to History and Culture

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## Preparation

### Lesson Setup

### Teacher Background

To prepare for this lesson, teachers should:

- Become familiar with rain-making auditory activity.
- Make a sample [rainstick](#).

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### What You'll Need

#### Materials

#### Resources

[Image](#)

[The Water Cycle](#)[Slideshow](#)[Rainsticks](#)**Required Technology**

1 Computer per

Classroom

Projector

VCR

DVD Player

**Technology Notes**

Either A VCR or DVD

Player is needed, not both.

Practice the rain-making science experiment.

Review and select a **rain poem**.Become familiar with the poem, “**Where is the Rain?**”Become familiar with the **African Rain Song**.Obtain a copy of the children’s book *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*.Obtain a copy of the PBS Reading Rainbow presentation of *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* (optional).Become familiar with the **water cycle**.

Request parental assistance for rainstick-making activity.

**Physical Space**

Classroom

**Grouping**

Large Group Instruction

**Staging**

Prepare a circle area. Prepare the arts area by covering tables with newspaper or disposable tablecloths. Demonstrate craft activity to parent volunteers.

[< previous: Overview](#)[next: Instruction >](#)**Instruction****ENGAGE**

**1. Play the rain game.** Seat students in a circle on the floor. Do not tell them what they will be doing. Wait until everyone is completely silent. Start by quietly tapping your fingertips together slowly. Signal to the students to do what you’re doing. Slowly increase the frequency and intensity of the finger tapping. Clap your whole hands together. Become louder. Move the clapping to floor slapping. Get as loud and “thunderous” as you can. Reverse the process slowly, returning to an occasional finger tap. (You have simulated a rainstorm starting with a few drops and moving into a downpour and then diminishing.)

**2. Discuss student observations of the rain game.** Ask students:

What did this remind you of?

What sense(s) did you use to experience this?

(If they are unable to guess rain, start the exercise again. This time, start with a few “real” raindrops falling into a bowl, and then move into the sensory activity.)

**3. Discuss the importance of rain.** Ask students:

Why do we need rain?

What would happen if it did not rain?

What other forms of weather provide water to the earth?

How is rain made?

**4. Make rain.** Bring water to a boil over a heat source. Once steam is rising (evaporating), place a plate with ice cubes over the rising steam. Ask students to observe what happens on the underside of the plate. (*Condensation will form and droplets of water will begin to fall.*) Explain to them that this is what happens with clouds to create rainfall. Show them the water cycle located under 'Resources in Reach'.

**BUILD KNOWLEDGE****Resources in Reach**

Here are the resources you'll need for each activity, in order of instruction.

**Engage**[The Water Cycle](#)**Apply**[Rainsticks](#)

**1. Read *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*.** (Or show the PBS Reading Rainbow episode *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*.) Locate Kenya on a map.

**2. Discuss and have students retell parts of the book.** Ask students:

What kinds of animals live on Kapiti Plain?

Which animals are wild?

Which animals are domesticated? (*the cattle*)

Why is Ki-pat concerned about the cattle? (*He and his people depend upon cattle for milk, meat, leather, etc.*)

Did the bow and arrow make the rain come?

How do we know what the weather may be? (*weather forecasters, looking at the sky, feeling it in our bodies, etc.*)

How did the plain changes after the rains come?

How did Ki-pat feel about this?

(You may want to read the book again, this time assigning repetitive phrases to student groups to say at the appropriate times.)

**3. Talk about “rain makers.”** In Kapiti Plain, the rain maker was the bow and arrow. Share with students that some cultures dance to make the rain come. Others sing and chant. Some people pray to a rain god. And other cultures make “instruments” that sound like rain to encourage the rain to come.

**4. Read and discuss “Where is the Rain?”** Ask students:

What animals were mentioned in the poem?

Can ants really fly? (*Yes, they can. They are present in the US as well as around the world. In the poem, they are a sign that it is going to rain.*)

What animals do we sometimes watch to see if it is going to rain? (*cows lying down – which really isn’t a good indicator!*)

What senses are used in the poem?

**5. Chant “Rain Song” in echo format.** The teacher should say a phrase and have the students repeat it. Share the translation of the song with students. Introduce **onomatopoeia** (words that sound like the sound they represent). Explain that the African words – chapha and Gqum – are to sound like rain and thunder, respectively. Ask students to list examples of onomatopoeia. (There is an alphabetical listing on the **onomatopoeia** site. Look at the top of the web page: A-F. G-M, etc.)

#### APPLY

**1. Introduce the rainstick.** Show students where Chile is on the map. Explain to them that Chileans use rainsticks to encourage rain to fall. Show them your home-made rainstick. Tell them that real rainsticks are made from the cactus plant. (Show them a real rainstick if you’re lucky enough to have one or use our photos of rainsticks provided in the resource carousel.)

**2. Make rainsticks.** Rainsticks can be made a variety of ways. Here are directions to make a simple rainstick:

Recruit parent helpers, if possible!

Draw a spiral down the length of a cardboard tube, starting at one end of the tube and ending at the other. Do not follow the natural seam.

Along the spiral, insert straight pins or small nails. The length of the nails or pins should be slightly less than the diameter of the cardboard tube.

Cover the cardboard tube (and pin or nail heads) with contact paper.

Close off one end of the tube with cardboard or a cap. Seal it in place with clear packing tape.

Put dried beans, rice, and/or unpopped popcorn into the tube.

Holding your hand over the open end of the tube, listen for the rain. Add or remove dried materials, as necessary.

Seal the other end of the tube with cardboard/cap and tape.

Decorate the rainstick with paints and permanent markers, if desired.

#### REFLECT

**1. Perform a rain poem .** Read the rain poem you selected, encouraging students to respond to each line or phrase with the sound of their rainsticks. (Turn the rainsticks upside down and allow the rain to fall.)

**2. Have each student write a short rain poem.** Ask them to use their senses to capture the feeling of rain in 10 lines or less. (Depending on the age and writing ability of the child, this poem could be very short. You may want to use a writing prompt, such as

"When it rains, I ...")

**3. Have each student perform his or her poem.** Add the instrumentation of the rainstick, where appropriate.

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## Standards

ARTSEdge Lessons connect to the National Standards for Arts Education, the Common Core Standards, and a range of other subject area standards.

### Common Core/State Standards

Select state and grade(s) below, then click "Find" to display Common Core and state standards.

Mississippi ▼ 2 ▼

### Mississippi Common Core Standards

#### Language Arts

**SL.2.1(b):** Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

### Mississippi K-12 Curriculum Framework

#### Arts Education

**1.1.:** Students will know fundamental skills in using a variety of media, techniques, and processes to produce and study works of art

**2.1.:** Students will develop perceptual skills and use visual arts vocabulary while creating and studying works of art

#### Language Arts

**2.a.4.:** Genres - Fiction, nonfiction, and poetry

### National Standards For Arts Education

#### Visual Arts

**Grade K-4 Visual Arts Standard 1:** Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

**Grade K-4 Visual Arts Standard 4:** Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

#### Visual Arts

**Grade K-4 Visual Arts Standard 6:** Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines

#### Music

**Grade K-4 Music Standard 2:** Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music

**Grade K-4 Music Standard 8:** Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts

**Grade K-4 Music Standard 9:** Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Throughout the nation, standards of learning are being revised, published and adopted. During this time of transition, ARTSEdge will continually add connections to the Common Core, Next Generation Science standards and other standards to our existing lessons, in addition to the previous versions of the National Standards across the subject areas.

The Arts Standards used in ARTSEdge Lessons are the 1994 voluntary national arts standards. The Arts learning standards were revised in 2014; please visit the **National Core Arts Standards** (<http://nationalartsstandards.org>) for more. The Kennedy Center is working on developing new lessons to connect to these standards, while maintaining the existing lesson library aligned to the Common Core, other state standards, and the 1994 National Standards for Arts Education.

**National Standards in Other Subjects****Geography**

**Geography Standard 1:** Understands the characteristics and uses of maps, globes, and other geographic tools and technologies

**Language Arts**

**Language Arts Standard 1:** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

**Language Arts Standard 4:** Gathers and uses information for research purposes

**Language Arts**

**Language Arts Standard 8:** Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

**Science**

**Science Standard 1:** Understands atmospheric processes and the water cycle

**Science Standard 6:** Understands relationships among organisms and their physical environment

< previous: **Instruction**

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