



Rhymes and Reasons : Literature & Language Play for Phonological Awareness

Michael Opitz, Michael F. Opitz

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Here at last is a theoretically sound, delightfully readable alternative to commercial phonics kits. *Rhymes & Reasons* is a smart, up-to-date, all-in-one guide to phonological awareness-what it is, what it isn't, and the best practices for teaching it. Most important, it spotlights the best of recently published children's literature that can be used to foster children's understanding of phonological awareness in enjoyable and meaningful contexts.

"My goal" says author Michael Opitz, "is to provide a resource for busy teachers to access quality literature and provide kid-tested, practical suggestions that will engage children and further finesse their phonological awareness." In clear and accessible prose, he explains the differences between phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics. All sorts of language play are explored-*assonance, rhyme, rhythm, phoneme substitution, alliteration, and more*-as Opitz provides detailed suggestions for teaching these features.

The most valued feature of the book is certain to be the extensively annotated treasury of current children's literature. More than 350 books are listed, all carefully selected according to the following criteria:

- All books feature some sort of language play.
- Each book lends itself to further language-exploration activities and book extension ideas.
- Content is appropriate for primary grade-level readers-both in terms of ideas and language.
- Book choices can be read aloud.
- All are authentic texts (i.e., written from a literary as opposed to pedagogical standpoint).
- All can be purchased in a bookstore or found in local libraries.

What's more, Opitz provides additional support through a related website that is accessible through the Heinemann homepage.

With a resource as comprehensive and current as this, teachers will be well prepared as they seek to instill a love of language and set children on the road to becoming independent lifelong readers.

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