

The Mitten Tree

Introduction

A *HyperStudio* stack about a familiar piece of winter clothing can spark a variety of classroom activities. Children will enjoy seeing themselves in a classroom-created mitten book as well as trying to find the mitten they need to keep warm. For children in warm climates, a similar stack could be created with a piece of clothing which are worn in pairs such as socks.

Materials

- Computer
- *HyperStudio*
- Photos of children in winter clothing

Ahead of Time

- Take a picture of each child in his or her winter coat, using a digital camera or 35 mm camera. Either download or scan the pictures into the computer so that they are in a format to put into *HyperStudio*.
- Create a *HyperStudio* stack about different colored mittens.
- Draw or use clip art to make a tree filled with blue, red, yellow and green mittens or mittens of other desired colors. Copy this page and paste it as many times as necessary so that there is a page for each child in the classroom.
- Place each child's picture onto one of the pages with the mitten tree. Copy one of the colored mittens and place it on one of the child's hands, leaving the other hand without a mitten. Create buttons for each mitten on the tree which matches the child's one mitten. Add animation so that when the button is clicked it will move the mitten onto the child's bare hand.
- Buttons are made only for the mittens that match the child's one mitten on each page. When a child clicks the wrong color, nothing will happen. If desired, you could add a button to each mitten and record a child saying the color of the mitten.
- Add a button to turn the page. Record a child saying "Help (next child's name) find his mitten." As the page turns to the next child's page, children will hear this recording.
- Print a copy of the book and laminate it for durability.



Introductory Activity

Read a book about mittens such as Jan Brett's *The Mitten*. Talk about the characteristics and purpose of mittens, the similarities and differences, how sometimes mittens get lost,

and what to do to find one. Share the printed version of the *HyperStudio* book, “The Mitten Tree,” with the children in a small group. Encourage children to talk about the mittens or to point to the one they think matches the child’s mitten for each page.

Computer Activity

Review the *HyperStudio* stack in a small group at the computer. Talk with the children about who is on each page and what mitten the child needs. Take turns finding the right mitten. After the children have gone through the book once, encourage them to explore the stack and work cooperatively to find the mittens together. Some children may want to follow along with the printed version of the book while another child uses the mouse.

Extended Activity

- Play a matching game with real mittens. Mix up the children’s mittens and see if they can find the right match.
- Sort real mittens according to size, color, pattern, and texture. Make a graph from these features and talk about numbers and comparisons.
- Make paper mittens and encourage children to decorate them with art materials.
- Play a guessing game. Have one child hide something inside his or her mitten. Encourage the other children to ask questions to figure out what it is.
- Print “The Mitten Tree” book from the *HyperStudio* program and circulate a copy among the families so children can match the mittens at home. Place a copy of the book in the reading center so that children can look at it during free play.
- Make a set of different colored mittens out of static cling vinyl. Children can then stick the matching mitten onto the laminated pages of the book.
- Make puppets out of old mittens. The children can play with these at school and take them home to share.
- Write a class story about mittens. Children can each contribute a story and drawing of their mittens or the story can be based on winter play activities with mittens. Make a copy of the story that can be sent home to share with families.

Summary

Activities designed around a *HyperStudio* stack about mittens help children learn a variety of skills, including color recognition, matching, sequencing and problem solving. Although this stack seems most suitable during the winter, children may enjoy revisiting it at other times of the year.