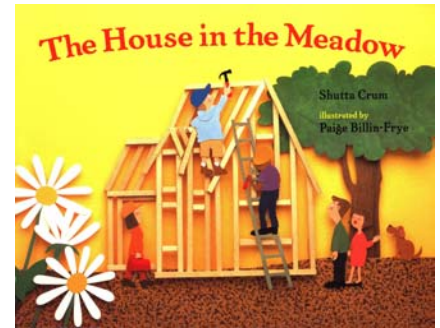


The House in the Meadow

9 backhoe diggers, 8 masons, 7 carpenters, 6 well drillers, 5 roofers, 4 plumbers, 3 electricians, 2 painters and 1 inspector show up with all their trucks and tools to dig, pour, hammer, drill, plumb, wire, paint, and inspect a fine new house. And when the couple and their friends have a house-warming party, a new baby comes, too!

Inspired by Olive A. Wadsworth's old counting poem, this exuberant rhyme celebrates the fun of counting, the excitement of building a house, and the satisfaction of sharing work.



Written by Shutta Crum
Illustrated by Paige Billin-Frye
Albert Whitman & Company,
2003
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for ages 3-7

CLASSROOM EXTENSION IDEAS

LANGUAGE ARTS

In *The House in the Meadow*, the author uses many kinds of patterns. There is **meter**, **rhyming patterns**, **commands and answers**, as well as the **counting aspects** of the story. How many kinds of patterning details can the students find? Did they note that every second line in the book begins with a past tense verb?

This story is based upon the classic counting poem, "Over in the Meadow," by Olive A. Wadsworth. Bring in versions of that poem from other books and compare them. Discuss why the author chose to use this poem as the basis of her book. What aspects of *The House in the Meadow* are different from more traditional versions? Are there other classic stories that have greatly varying versions? Can your students find two examples in the school or public library? Did they note the name of the moving company in *The House in the Meadow*?

SOCIAL STUDIES

Study the multicultural, multi-age cast of characters in *The House in the Meadow*. Discuss women, minorities, and seniors within the context of work. Are our societal expectations changing?

Is the cast of characters in *The House in the Meadow* representative of your students' community? Examine other classroom reading materials for multicultural and mixed gender and age representation.

LOGICAL THINKING

The House in the Meadow follows a proscribed set of steps necessary to build a house. Have your students think of a goal and then list the steps that are needed to reach that goal. This could be building something like a fort or a boat, or doing something like playing the guitar. If it is a process that will be accomplished while in class, post the lists and allow each child to monitor his/her progress as steps are accomplished — as the inspector does in the story.

CREATIVE ARTS

Illustrator Paige Billin-Frye created the characters in this book by painting them, cutting them out, mounting them on foam board or cardboard, and then lighting them and photographing them. Experiment with creating "3-D" characters by mounting artwork on cardboard above backgrounds. Discuss the creation of shadows as seen in the book and in the artwork of your students.