If I Ran the Zoo
by Dr. Seuss

Another classic by the master of rhyme – “a Russian Palooski, whose headski is redski and belly is blueski” is a much more interesting animal than a lion.

READ

Before: Introduce the book and tell the children a little bit about it. Follow with a comment or question that is related to the story such as, what do you think this story is about? Encourage a discussion so the children can comment, ask questions, and express their feelings. Set the stage for listening by asking an “I wonder” statement based on the cover illustration.

• I wonder if that creature is friendly or fierce?

During: Encourage the children to comment on the illustrations, ask questions and predict what will happen next in the story. Children gain confidence and a sense of achievement through being able to correctly predict how a story will end. Point out “rare words” (e.g., those words that are not commonly used in every day conversation) and help the children relate the meaning in a way that makes sense to them.

Rare Words

• old-fashioned-out of date and belonging to a time in the past
• unusual-remarkable or out of the ordinary
• keen-sharp and intense
• gawk-stare stupidity
• roosts-places where birds sleep
• topknot-a small tuft of feathers on the head of some birds
• squeal-a short high-pitched cry
• slant-set at an angle
• custard-a dessert made of sugar, eggs and milk
• brooks-small streams
• crannies-small narrow cracks or holes
• nooks-a private quiet place
• geography-the study of the Earth’s physical features (rivers, mountains, etc.)
• clever-smart
• heaps-very much
• meek-mild or quiet
• sleek-smooth and shiny
• queer-unusual or eccentric
• puzzled-confused
• scrawny-skinny and small
• blistering-very hot
• chieftains-leaders of a group of people
• capture-to catch and lock up
Discuss the story. Ask questions...

- Let’s name as many zoo animals as possible.
- Gerald wants to have a zoo with new and unusual animals. What do you think of that?
- Which animal – an orangutan or a camel – do you think is more interesting?
- How do new animals get to the zoo? By truck? By airplane? By boat?
- Let’s name as many zoo animals as possible that have horns.
- Would it be more fun to ride an elephant or an ostrich?
- If the zookeeper needed to put a bear in a cage, how would he/she do that?
- Let’s name as many zoo animals as possible that fly.
- Who feeds the animals at the zoo? Is there a chef?

DO

Rhyme Time!
Review the list of words below found in If I Ran the Zoo and ask the children to think of more words that rhyme.

- Zoo
- Stuff
- Find
- Beast
- Walk
- Hat
- Gum
- Mustard
- Goats
- Cheer
- Sleek
- Found
- Ride
- Hand
- Say
- Toe
- Paste
- Belly
- Park