



Teachers' Notes A YEAR ON OUR FARM

Written by Penny Matthews
Illustrated by Andrew McLean

Teachers' Notes written by Linnet Hunter

OMNIBUS BOOKS

Outline

This picture book by Penny Matthews describes a year on an Australian farm from the viewpoint of a farm child. Each month of the year dictates the tasks that must be done on a small mixed farm. Fruit ripens and is picked, lambs are born, sheep are shorn, hay is harvested and baled. Summer is followed by autumn, winter and spring; brown paddocks become green again, and always farmers wait for rain. *A Year on Our Farm* shows the passage of the seasons through the eyes of the children for whom the farm with all its animals is home. Andrew McLean's exquisite watercolour paintings with their gentleness and wry humour complete a particularly successful collaboration.

Penny Matthews grew up on a farm near Eden Valley, South Australia, and this book is based largely on her own experience as a farm child. Her publications include *Something about Water*, *The Little Red Bear*, *Jump, Baby!*, *Jack's Owl*, *The Sea Dog* and *The Best Pet*.

Andrew McLean is the illustrator of many short-listed and award-winning books. He lives in Victoria. His previous publications include the *Josh* series, *Hector and Maggie*, *Dog Tales* and *Highway*.

Category	Picture Book
Title	A Year on Our Farm
Author	Penny Matthews
Illustrator	Andrew McLean
Format	275 x 245
Extent	32 pp
Age	3+
Australian RRP	\$14.99
Binding	Paperback
Printing	Colour
ISBN	978 1 86291 492 6

ENGLISH

Curriculum Frameworks Learning Outcomes

1. Interact with teachers, peers and known adults in both structured and informal classroom activities dealing briefly with known topics.

2. Interact in more confident and extended ways in structured and spontaneous school situations.

1. Behave like a competent reader and consistently interpret some familiar written symbols.

2. Construct and retell meanings from short texts with familiar topics and vocabulary, predictable text structures and frequent illustrations.

3. Interpret and discuss some relationships between ideas, information and events in texts with familiar content and a small range of unfamiliar linguistic structures and features.

Speaking and Listening

- What special events happen each season?
- What month is your birthday in? What kind of weather is it on your birthday? Which season does that month belong to?
- Do you enjoy being cold? Being hot? Being wet?
- Tell your teacher everything that you can remember about what happened on the farm in the story so he/she can write it on the board.
- Group the activities together.
- What kind of activities happened in winter? / summer?
- Choose one person in the family from the book. Look at what that person does on the farm at different times of the year. What would be your favourite activity?

Reading

- In the bottom left-hand corner of some pages you can find a word in capitals, a picture of a tree and a smaller word underneath.
- What do you notice about the tree in each picture? Can you find that tree somewhere else in the book? What is happening to the tree?
- Listen to other farm stories. How are the farms in the different stories similar? How are they different?
- Find the words for the father, mother and baby animals in the book.
- There is a saying: 'Which came first, the chicken or the egg?' What do you think?
- Read the story *The Little Red Hen*. How did she make the bread? Where does our food come from? Look at the food in your lunch box. Discuss with a small group where the food came from.

Writing

1. Behave like a competent writer and produce written symbols with the intention of conveying an idea or message.

2. Write brief texts that include some related ideas about familiar topics.

3. Experiment with interrelating ideas and information when writing about familiar topics in a small range of text types.

- Cut out pictures from magazines of people and places in different seasons and stick them on a larger page to make a collage. Write the name of the season underneath.
- Think of words about the farm that start with the letters to the word FARM. Finish the following sentence in your work book:
In spring we ... (Repeat for all the seasons.)
- Using large cutout letters from the word WATER, think of everything you use water for. Stick the letter on a large page and write and draw these things around it. Lots of them could begin with the same letter (e.g. washing!).
- Who might be telling the story of the farm? What is his/her place in the family? What might his/her name be? What might his/her favourite time of the year be? Write about that person's favourite activity on the farm.
- Make bread at school. Write a step-by-step description of what you had to do to make it.

ART

1. Respond to visual art works in a personal way.

2. Respond to visual art works giving reasons for preferences. Discuss the way visual art works are made and used for a range of purposes.

1. Draw upon play and imagination in making visual art works.

2. Use experience and imagination to make visual art works.

- If you were allowed to keep any illustration from the book, which one would you choose? Why?
- Look closely at the illustrations. What colours has the artist used to show heat and cold?
- Everyone in the class chooses a month of the year and paints a large painting to show something special that happens in that month. Display the paintings in the four corners of the classroom – one for each season. What is similar about the paintings? What is different?
- Each child collects a natural object (leaf, stick, gumnut etc.) and uses it in a group construction of a diorama of the farm.

DRAMA

1. Draw upon play and imagination in drama activities.

- Fill a big basket with clothes and hats relevant to each season. One person draws out an item and, wearing it, performs an action that might occur in that season. The rest guess which action and season it is.
- Change the words of the songs 'Oh, If I Were a Farmer', 'The Farmer in the Dell' and 'Old MacDonald Had a Farm' to suit this farm.
- Memory game: *I lived on a farm and on that farm there was a ...* Add an extra item from the story farm each turn.

SOSE

1. Describe aspects of the student's life in familiar environments. Explain why families and other groups have rules, and how these rules are applied. Illustrate how people use and care for familiar environments.

2. Examine change over time in the local community and environment. Explain how and why resources are used in the local community.

- What kind of task is each member of the family responsible for? Draw a picture of a job that you have to do at home and draw a job from the farm next to it. Why might the children on the farm be involved in so many activities?
- What sorts of animals would you choose to care for on the farm? How many different animals are there on the farm? Are all the animals useful? How?
- What are some events that are celebrated on the farm?
- What is water used for on the farm? Where does it come from? Draw a cycle to show where it comes from and where it goes to.
- What might the windmill be for? Have you ever had water restrictions at your house? What does this mean? What are some ways of saving water?
- Grow some wheat seeds on a cotton pad or in an eggshell propped up in an egg carton. (You can draw faces on the eggshell!) Watch your seeds every day and sketch them as they grow. Find as many foods as you can that are made from wheat.
- Choose a food from the supermarket and construct a development chain in pictures to show how the item was made, from farm to shelf.

Extension Activities

- Organise a visit from a travelling baby-animal farm.
- Commence or continue a recycling program within the school community.
- Some schools keep chickens as part of a recycling and composting program. Children are rostered to care for them on weekends. Your school could consider a similar scheme.
- Develop a school vegetable or herb patch. Read information about the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden National program at <http://www.healthyactive.gov.au/internet/healthyactive/publishing.nsf/Content/kitchen-garden>
- Build a working model windmill or other farm device.

RESOURCES

Title	Author	Origin
<i>Farmer Schulz's Ducks</i>	Thiele, Colin	Australian
<i>Cuckoobush Farm</i>	King-Smith, Dick	English
<i>Noisy Noises on the Farm</i>	Lacome, Julie	English
<i>Farmer Duck</i>	Waddell, Martin	English
<i>My Farm</i>	Lester, Alison	Australian
<i>Farmer Pelz's Pumpkins</i>	Thiele, Colin	Australian

Hi-Five videos — one for each season

Websites

Penny Matthews: www.scholastic.com.au/authors

Andrew Mclean: www.scholastic.com.au/illustrators