

ACTIVITY 3.3

Sensory Story Planning

Engage all five senses to make stories come alive.

WHY THIS WORKS

Children remember best when stories activate their senses — what they see, hear, feel, smell, and even taste. When you weave a sensory thread through your read-alouds, you're not just telling a story; you're anchoring it in the body, where memories last longest.

This activity helps you plan simple, realistic sensory touches that transform an ordinary reading session into something immersive and memorable. You don't need a prop box or elaborate setup — a single scent, sound, or texture at the right moment is often all it takes to turn a good story into an unforgettable one.

Think of yourself as a gentle stage director. You set the scene, invite your child's curiosity, and let their imagination do the rest. That partnership — your preparation plus their wonder — is where the magic lives.

HOW TO USE THIS ACTIVITY

1

Before reading, glance through your story and note a few sensory moments — a smell, a sound, a texture, or a colour worth lingering on.

2

Choose one or two senses to highlight. You don't need to do them all at once — one well-chosen sensory moment is more powerful than five rushed ones.

3

Add small, realistic touches: a prop, a sound, or a question that gently draws attention to that sense at the right moment in the story.

4

After reading, ask your child which sensory moment they liked best — and let their answer surprise you.

SENSORY PLANNING TEMPLATE

Use these as a menu of ideas. Mix and match based on your story, your child, and what you have on hand.

Sense	Example from Story	Activity or Prompt
Sight	Colourful illustrations, sparkly stars, vivid scene descriptions	"What colours or shapes do you notice?" / Pause on one illustration / Draw one favourite image after reading
Sound	Rhythmic words, a storm, footsteps, animal calls	Clap along to rhythm / Play gentle background sounds / Make sound effects together as they appear
Touch	A furry blanket, smooth stone, rough bark, soft feathers	Feel a texture prop while reading / "What would that feel like?" / Compare to real-life items
Smell	Forest, fresh cookies, ocean breeze, rain, flowers	Light a scented candle or sniff cinnamon / "What do you smell when you imagine this place?"
Taste	Berries, porridge, honey, soup, something sour or sweet	Taste a simple matching snack during reading / "Can you taste what the bear ate?"

REFLECT TOGETHER

Once the story is finished, invite your child to look back over the whole experience — not just the plot.

ASK

"Which sense helped you imagine the story best?"

TIP

You don't need props for every sense. Sometimes imagination is the best sensory tool of all — asking "what would this smell like?" invites your child to create that sensory experience from the inside out. That inner creation is just as powerful, and sometimes more so, than any prop you could hold.