

The Library

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ABOUT THE STORY

Told in light-hearted, rhythmic verse, this is the story of Elizabeth Brown, who prefers reading to all other activities. As she gets older, Elizabeth's collection of books grows until one day she realizes she can't buy even one more. She then decides to donate her collection to the town and creates its' first library, where she continues to borrow and read books as an old woman.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sarah Stewart grew up in Texas and studied Latin and philosophy. She has held the positions of teacher and speechwriter, and has reviewed children's books for *The New York Times*. All of Stewart's books have been illustrated by her husband, David Small, and include *The Gardener* (a *Caldecott Honor Book*), and *The Journey* (2001), both available as Live Oak Media readalongs.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

David Small grew up in Detroit, studied art and English at Wayne State University, and completed his graduate studies in art at Yale. After receiving his MFA degree, he taught at several colleges. Small currently writes and illustrates books for children. In addition to the collaborations with his wife, Sarah Stewart, and several other authors, Small has written many books including the best-selling *Imogene's Antlers*, *George Washington's Cows*, and *Eulalie and the Hopping Head*, all available as Live Oak Media Readalongs.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children to share some of their favorite past-times. Ask them to raise their hand if they like books and reading. Explain that Elizabeth Brown loves books, and would rather read than do anything else, and that this is the story of what she did with her huge collection of books.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

1. What style of writing did the author use in this story? (*rhyming*)
2. Was Elizabeth shy or out going? ("*...entered the world skinny, nearsighted, and shy*")
3. What did Elizabeth have in the trunk she brought to school? (*books*)

4. Why do you think Elizabeth went to her friends' houses late at night to collect the books she had loaned them? (*missed the books, wanted them back*)
5. Why would it be interesting to visit Elizabeth's house full of books? (*various answers*)
6. Where did Elizabeth go to borrow books after she gave hers away? (*the library*)
7. What were some of the things Elizabeth could have done instead of read? (*play with dolls, skate, go on dates, eat potato chips*)

Vocabulary

Be sure students have an understanding of the following terms. Depending on age, simply discuss the terms, or have children look them up in a dictionary.

nearsighted,	incredible,	steamer trunk,	Olympiad,
promptly,	tutoring,	goddesses,	Courthouse

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Language Arts: Fact or Fiction?

Explain that materials in the library are divided into two groups: fact or fiction. Describe the difference between the two, and then have children practice discerning which of the following titles are fiction and which are nonfiction. *Sharks* by Gibbons; *Make Way for Ducklings* by McCloskey; *Hi, Cat!* By Keats; *Whales* by Gibbons; *Madeline* by Bemelmans; *Corduroy* by Freeman

Mathematics/History: Do the Dewey

Bring the children to the library media center for a lesson on the Dewey Decimal System. Explain how the system works, and then, working with the media specialist, have children practice arranging nonfiction books using the DDS.

History/Language Arts: Thank you, Mr. Dewey

Have students research the creator of the Dewey Decimal System and create short biographical sketches about him. Tie this project in with research on the first American libraries (where they were, who built them, who went to them, etc.)

Home and Career Skills: Get me to the library on time!

Find out how many students visit the local library with their family. Arrange a field trip for your class to your local public library. Ask the librarian to give the children a brief tour and let them know what resources are available to them. Offer extra credit to children interested in interviewing the librarian. Have them write a short biography about a day in the life of a public librarian. How is it the same and different from Elizabeth's experience in the book?

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to make sure the sites are suitable.

Use the Internet to locate additional information on Sarah Stewart (What other books has she written? Does she have kids of her own? Where does she live? Use information to create verbal or written reports. Use the Internet to research Melvil Dewey. (When and where was he born? How did he get interested in libraries? How did he create the DDS?) Use information to create verbal or written reports.