

..... LESSON PLAN .....

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## Literature Links

Children will enjoy using their imaginations and KEVA planks to bring a book alive in your classroom. You can adapt this activity to fit any of your favorite books, or use some of the suggestions below.

### LITERATURE LINKS FOR OLDER CHILDREN

*Detectives in Togas* by Henry Winterfield

**Synopsis:** A detective story set in ancient Rome with seven school boys playing the parts of the detectives. This is a fun and suspenseful story that gives readers the feel of life in ancient Rome.

**KEVA Connection:** Students can build a Roman temple or the Roman Coliseum. The class could build the Roman Forum together with its temples and official buildings. Much of the story takes place criss-crossing the Forum.

**Language Extension:** As the class reads the book, have students keep a journal of who they think is the culprit and why. Students will be surprised as they follow red herrings throughout the book.

*The Door in the Wall* by Marguerite de Angeli

**Synopsis:** Set in England during the Middle Ages, this book follows the struggles and triumphs of a young boy, Robin, who must overcome many hardships. Robin faces paralysis after exposure to the plague, the dangers of travel among outlaws and a siege upon his castle.

**KEVA Connection:** The class can build Robin's castle with its inner and outer wall. Chessman or upright KEVA planks can be used to represent the attacking army besieging the castle. The class can reenact Robin's heroic part in the rescue of the castle.

**Language Extension:** Students can write a ballad telling of Robin's heroic deeds, or they may create their own tales of other gallant knights. The bard in the story would have entertained the Lords and Ladies with such tales of bravery.

*The Forgotten Door* by Alexander Key

**Synopsis:** This is a sci-fi book with a glimpse into an alien culture, lightyears ahead of Earth's. While reading it, the children must also solve the mystery of the origin of the young boy, Jon. All the while, the story portrays ordinary heroes and villains who must deal with an alien in their world.

**KEVA Connection:** Students can build Jon's family's spaceship. Have a contest for the best spaceship design.



**Language Extension:** Have the students write the newspaper article that will appear in the papers after the disappearance of Jon and the Bean family.

*James and the Giant Peach* by Roald Dahl

**Synopsis:** A fanciful story of a young boy named James who escapes his dreary life aboard a giant, magical peach. James' companions on his voyage are a delightful troop of giant insects.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the class build James' Giant Peach. Students can draw pictures of the insects to add to the peach.

**Language Extension:** Have the students make a photo album with written descriptions for James and his insect friends. Some of the insects in the story have written poems about themselves. Challenge students to write short poems for their albums.

*Little House in the Big Woods* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

**Synopsis:** The story of a young girl, Laura, and her sister and parents living in the backwoods of Wisconsin. This heartwarming story of family love captures the way of life during the pioneer days in America.

**KEVA Connection:** Have students build Laura's log cabin set in the woods.

**Language Extension:** Students can write a diary account from the point of view of Laura or Pa. Have students choose their favorite events to write about.

*My Father's Dragon* by Ruth Stiles Gannett

**Synopsis:** A young boy, Elmer Elevator, runs away from home to rescue a baby dragon. Along the way, Elmer must use his wits to subdue the wild beasts on Wild Island.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the students build Wild Island. Using KEVA flat building techniques, students can reproduce the map of Wild Island. Students can use the map and drawings of Elmer, the baboons, lions and dragons to re-tell the story.

**Language Extension:** Have students write further adventures of Elmer and his dragon friends. They can make up other imaginary lands for their adventures.

*Redwall* by Brian Jacques

**Synopsis:** This is an epic tale of a reluctant hero, Matthias the mouse, who lives in the Redwall Abbey. The story is set in a medieval world inhabited by animals that are very human in their capacity for both heroism and villainy.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the students build Redwall Abbey.

**Language Extension:** Have students write a ballad about the brave deeds of Matthias. Ballads may be traditional and rhyme, or may be written in free verse.



*Stuart Little* by E.B. White

**Synopsis:** The story of an extraordinary mouse named Stuart, who was born into a human family. Stuart has wonderful adventures as a mouse living in the giant world of humans. Stuart's confidence and know-how allow him to triumph over every mishap.

**KEVA Connection:** Have students build Stuart's sailing boat *The Wasp*. Students could also build a maze for Stuart to find his way out of.

**Language Extension:** This novel ends with a great deal of ambiguity. Have students write additional chapters for the book.

*21 Balloons* by William Pene du Bois

**Synopsis:** *21 Balloons* is an imaginative tale that captures the spirit of invention and exploration of the 1900's. An amateur balloonist is blown off-course and lands on a remote island inhabited by billionaires. The islanders have used their wealth to create an inventor's paradise.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the students build several of the international houses. Have the class research architecture styles from different countries to replicate the island structures.

**Language Extension:** Students can write a brief report about the country they have chosen. Students can pick a favorite food from their country and share it with the class in an international feast.

*A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

**Synopsis:** A young girl, Meg, her friend, Calvin, and her brother, Charles Wallace, travel across galaxies and fight evil alien forces to save Meg's father. This science fiction book is a coming-of-age tale where Meg finally realizes that she possesses the strength to combat the evil force that has held her father in bondage.

**KEVA Connection:** Have students build the ordered world of the city on the Red Planet. Discuss pattern and symmetrical design.

**Language Extension:** Meg's story is the story of a young girl beginning to take on the responsibility of the adult world. Have students write about what they plan to do as adults. They can write about career goals, education plans, dreams and aspirations, as well as any fears they might have.



## LITERATURE LINKS FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

*Bam, Bam, Bam* by Eve Merriam

**Synopsis:** A rhyming book with fanciful illustrations tells how construction workers must destroy buildings in order to put up new ones.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the students construct buildings of all shapes and sizes. Then have them move a few feet away and use bean bags or foam balls to topple the buildings.

*The Banshee Train* by Odds Bodkin

**Synopsis:** A ghostly tale of a mysterious train that warns of a washed out trestle bridge.

**KEVA Connection:** The students can build the trestle bridge that spans Gore Canyon. As a class, build an elevated track around your classroom.

*Builder of the Moon* by Tim Wynne-Jones

**Synopsis:** A young boy flies into space to rebuild the moon with his building blocks.

**KEVA Connection:** Have students rebuild the moon. Building round shapes with straight lines is a great design challenge. Point out illustrations in the book showing one way it could be done. Note: a full moon is shown in the books but a half moon or a quarter moon could also be done.

**Language Extension:** Have students write thank-you notes from the moon to David.

*City Street* by Douglass Florian

**Synopsis:** A picture book that gives brief glimpses of life in a big city.

**KEVA Connection:** As a class, build a city. Plan the things you will need: buildings, parks and transportation. Assign groups to build each part.

**Language Extension:** Label your city. Have students write the name of their buildings on an index card and prop it in front of their creation. Have each student tell the class about what they created and why it is important to the city.

*The Dream House* by Pirkko Vainio

**Synopsis:** Lucas builds his dream house on an island near the seashore, only to find he is lonely. In his boredom, he adds room upon room to his house, creating a tower. The wind bends his tower making it a bridge to the shore and friends.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the students re-create the shoreline and Lucas's house. Build a bridge to connect the shore to the island. Add children. (See *KEVA People* handout, Appendix N.)

**Language Extension:** Have students write short essays on the topics:

"I feel lonely when..." "I would like to build a bridge to..."



*Hosni the Dreamer* by Ehud Ben-Ezer

**Synopsis:** Hosni is a shepherd for a wealthy sheik. Hosni dreams of a faraway city and is ridiculed for his fantasy. By listening to a wise proverb, he is able to realize his dream.

**KEVA Connection:** Build the city in Hosni's dream with its walls, stairs and minarets.

**Language Extension:** Have students describe their "dream" place. What does it look like? Why is it special? Why is it different? How will you get there?

*A House Is a House for Me* by Mary Anne Hoberman

**Synopsis:** Countless things are depicted as "houses" for the items they contain. Social studies and science topics are dealt with in imaginative, witty poetry.

**KEVA Connection:** Choose a "house" from the book and build it.

**Language Extension:** Make a classroom list of more "houses" and their occupants. Have the class write short poems about one or more of the new houses.

*Look at the Moon* by Mary Gardlick

**Synopsis:** A beautiful description of the whole Earth as the moonlight sweeps over it.

**KEVA Connection:** Have the students choose a setting, animal, building or object that the moon sees and build it. Or, divide the class into groups to build a city, woods, ships at sea, a jungle, the Arctic or other regions.

*The Maid and the Mouse and the Odd-Shaped House* by Paul Zelinsky

**Synopsis:** A maid and a mouse build an odd little house that, with the help of clever illustrations, turns into a cat.

**KEVA Connection:** Have students build their own odd-shaped houses. Emphasize unique building features—the odder the better.

**Language Extension:** Have the children pretend to be a real estate agent who will show you around their odd-shaped house. Have them write up a description of the house for the newspaper.

*Mimi and the Dream House* by Martin Waddell

**Synopsis:** Mimi the mouse decides to build a house. Her sisters and brothers design and build her fancy houses, but Mimi rejects them and builds a house suited for her, where everyone can visit.

**KEVA Connection:** Have students build a dream house for themselves. If time permits, have them make a drawing of their house before they build, as Mimi did.

**Language Extension:** Have students briefly describe their dream houses to the class telling what is special about their creation.



*Mystery Mansion* by Michael Garland

**Synopsis:** Tommy receives a mysterious note from his aunt, which sends him on a trip through her enchanted mansion in search of clues. The illustrations in the book contain clues that help the reader and Tommy solve the riddle.

**KEVA Connection:** Build Aunt Jean's mansion. Create some of the animals you see. Make a maze.

**Language Extension:** Have small groups make mazes using KEVA planks. Have them begin a scavenger hunt with the riddle in the center of the maze. One or two other stops in the scavenger hunt will provide plenty of movement in a classroom. Be sure the riddle for the next stop is found at the answer for the first riddle. Riddles can be as simple as "look beside the pencil sharpener." The answer can be as simple as "You found me."

*Oh, the Places You'll Go* by Dr. Seuss

**Synopsis:** A challenge to get up and go, with your imagination and determination as your only limits. Zany challenges and wacky encounters are all a reflection of real-life experiences.

**KEVA Connection:** Build your dream "place." Make it as exotic, zany and creative as you can.

**Language Extension:** Briefly describe the place you have built. What is it called? What does it look like? What can you do there? Read the descriptions aloud to the class and try to match the description to the creation.

*People, People Everywhere* by Nancy Van Laan

**Synopsis:** The hustle and bustle of city life is contrasted with the quiet countryside. Both are filled with people.

**KEVA Connection:** Divide the class into two groups. Have one group build a city and one group build a small town or farm.

**Language Extension:** Have each student write or tell about the place that they would rather live and why.

*Rotten Island* by William Steig

**Synopsis:** Rotten Island has rotten weather and horrible, cranky creatures that love to hate one another. A flower blooms into this nastiness, sending the creatures into chaos.

**KEVA Connection:** Make a rotten island in your classroom. Form the perimeters of the island with a single flat row of planks. Add a KEVA planks volcano and creatures. Plant a flower (paper cutout) in the middle, and have a KEVA planks battle by tossing beanbags or foam balls at your creatures.

**Language Extension:** Think of a name for the new island and write about who will come to live there.



*Steel Beams and Iron Men* by Mike Cherry

**Synopsis:** A personal look at the job of constructing skyscrapers and bridges. Lots of new vocabulary as you learn about gofers, pushers and spud wrenches. A first-person account of the courage required to work far above the ground.

**KEVA Connection:** Build skyscrapers from KEVA planks.

**Math Extension:** Calculate the ratio of the height of your building to that of an actual skyscraper.

*Zoo-Looking* by Mem Fox

**Synopsis:** Flora visits the zoo with her dad and sees many animals doing interesting things. The book is illustrated in collage.

**KEVA Connection:** Make a classroom zoo with KEVA planks. Invite guests to visit your zoo.