

Weather

Adventures in Reading:

Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets



Funded in part by
the Park Foundation, Inc.

Contents:

- Two books - one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey

for teachers and librarians



This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a fiction and nonfiction book about weather, appropriate for a first and second grade listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of suggested alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The featured books are ***Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*** by Judi Barrett and ***Weather*** by Seymour Simon. ***Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*** tells a tall but tasty tale of wacky weather. In the town of Chewandswallow, the weather provides three delicious meals a day. But when severe weather comes to town bringing storms of gigantic food, Chewandswallow residents must figure out how to save themselves. In ***Weather***, noted science writer Seymour Simon uses photographs to help explain what weather is. Readers are introduced to how general weather conditions are formed and the type of instruments used to help predict the weather.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and nonfiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> Creativity Activity: a hands-on craft project
- >> Imagination Activity: encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> Get real Activity: focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> Two books — one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> Parent information sheet
- >> Three themed activity pages
- >> Bookmark
- >> Survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you.

Let reading rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website:

www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact. Click on "Family Literacy Bags"

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Welcome

Dear _____

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere — not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about _____ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child
- >> three related activities
- >> bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by _____ .

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

Teacher signature

To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit www.ReadingRockets.org

ADVENTURES IN READING!

Instructions

How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet

Getting ready

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction — a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

Start the fun

3. When you know you'll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child — can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. If you are using the fiction title ***Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*** by Judi Barrett, you will be sharing a tall tale — a story with bigger than life elements. As you read and explore the pictures, talk with your child about the exaggerated details and wonder what will happen next. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book ***Weather*** by Seymour Simon, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book focuses on real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child's interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

When you're done...

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child's school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning — and reading — too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don't be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don't have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

Tips for reading fiction books with kids:

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don't need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*

Weather Wardrobe



“What should I wear today?” The answer to that question has a lot to do with the weather. For their health and safety, kids need to know what clothing works best for different kinds of weather. In the town of Chewandswallow in ***Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs***, imagine that it is tricky for residents to know just what to wear when a storm of spaghetti or a pea soup fog is predicted. It’s sometimes equally hard to plan appropriate clothing for scattered rain showers or light snow flurries.

In this craft activity, your child will consider all kinds of weather and design a weather-friendly wardrobe. This activity will challenge your child to think about how to dress appropriately for different seasons and weather events.

Supplies

- >> Our Weather Wardrobe template (2 pages or more as needed)
- >> Scissors
- >> Pencil, crayons or markers, or paint
- >> Fabric scraps, construction paper, yarn (optional)

Getting Started

After you read weather-related titles, talk with your child about how weather plays a part in everyone’s lives and why it is important to pay attention to the weather. Find out what your child thinks is important about the weather.

Lining Things Up

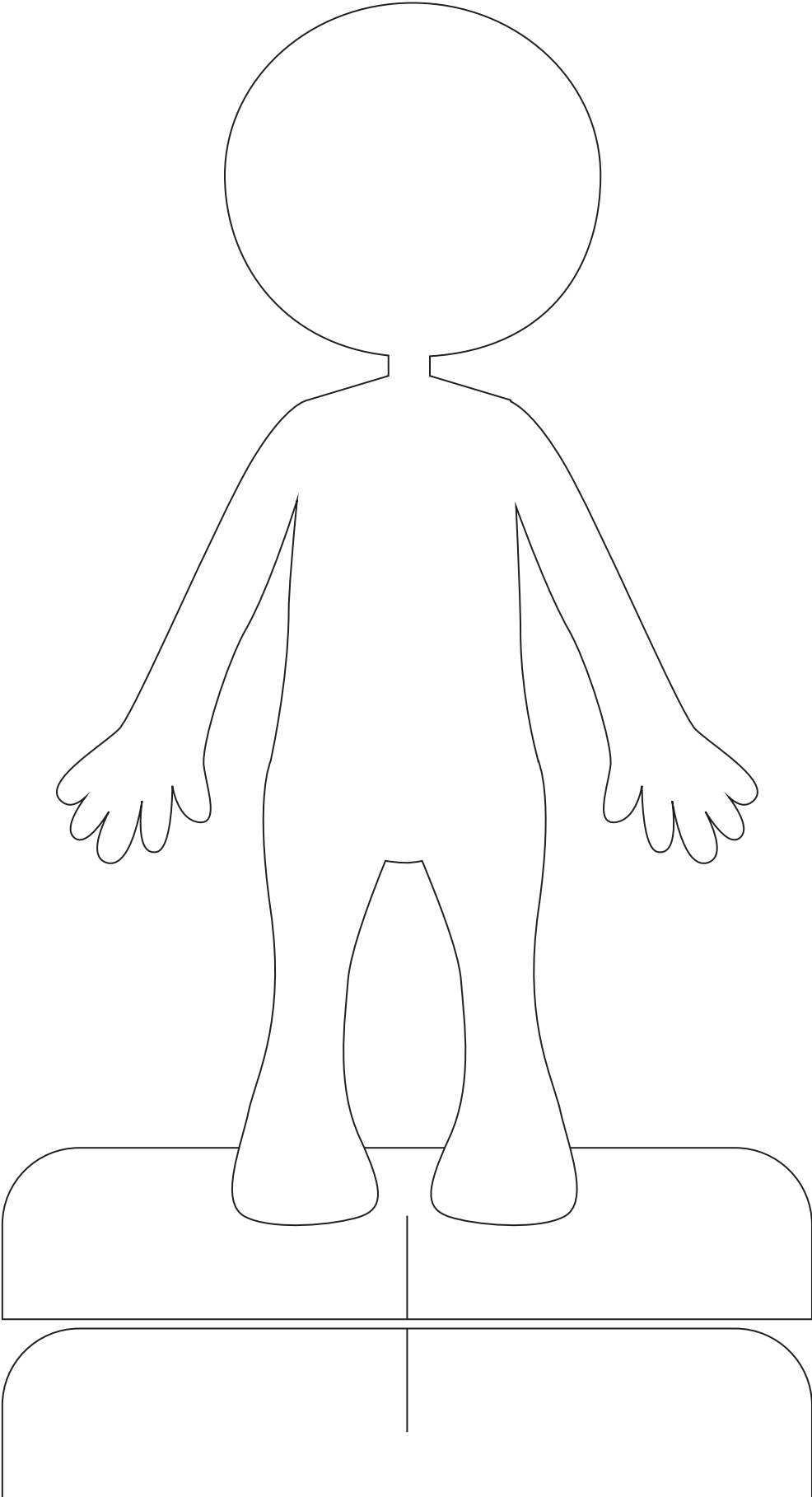
The Weather Wardrobe template has two pages. The first page is an outline of a person and the second page includes basic wardrobe items. Depending on how extensive your child’s clothing needs are for your local weather, you may want to make several additional copies of the basic wardrobe items or trace them as needed. You’ll also need to plan to adapt the wardrobe items. Let your child know that if he wants shorts or short sleeves, it is okay to alter the pants and shirt patterns. If he needs a coat or jacket, he should add details to the shirt pattern.

Have your child start with the person figure, drawing hair, facial features and coloring other details. This figure represents your child, so have him take his time. You may want to provide a mirror to help him in this self portraiture. Have your child cut out the figure when finished.

Then, after deciding how many outfits or articles of clothing are needed, have your child color and add details to the basic wardrobe items. As your child works, talk with him about the reasons behind dressing for the seasons, such as wearing light clothing that still protects from the sun to keep cool in the summer or the importance of staying warm and dry to keep skin from chapping or from developing frostbite in cold weather.

When his wardrobe is complete and cut out, offer different scenarios for dressing, such as a day of sledding, a rainy school day, or a bus ride to the park in autumn and see if he can dress his figure for weather success!

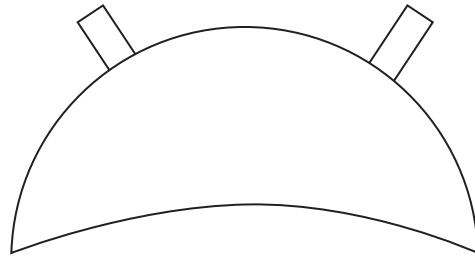
Weather Wardrobe Template 1 – Figure Outline



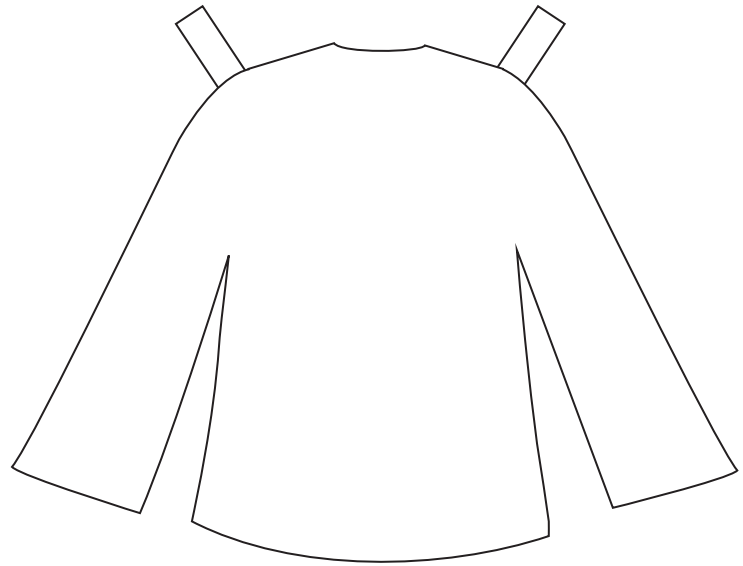
Weather Wardrobe Template 2 – Basic wardrobe items

If the wardrobe item you want or need isn't here, try to draw it or fashion it from scrap fabric or construction paper.

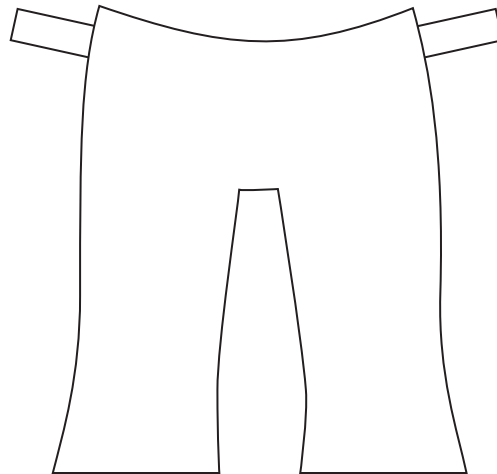
- >> Add what you like to the basic hat to make it suitable weather wear.



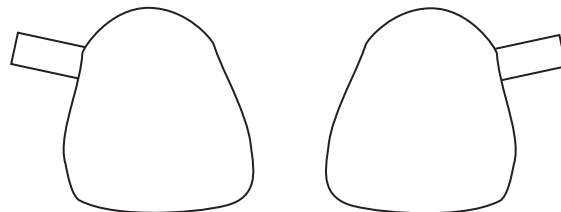
- >> This can be a long-sleeved shirt or altered to be a short-sleeved shirt by trimming the sleeves. By adding details like buttons or pockets, it becomes a jacket.



- >> This can be a pair of long pants or altered to be short-sleeved shirt by trimming the pant legs. Adding color or design can also make them rain pants or snow pants.



- >> By adding your own details, these basic shoes can become winter boots, rain boots, sneakers or sandals.



Batter Up!



Reading ***Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*** is sure to work up an appetite. Head to the kitchen and start where Grandpa did — with pancakes! Read and follow a pancake recipe with your child for more reading practice and for practical experience in following directions.

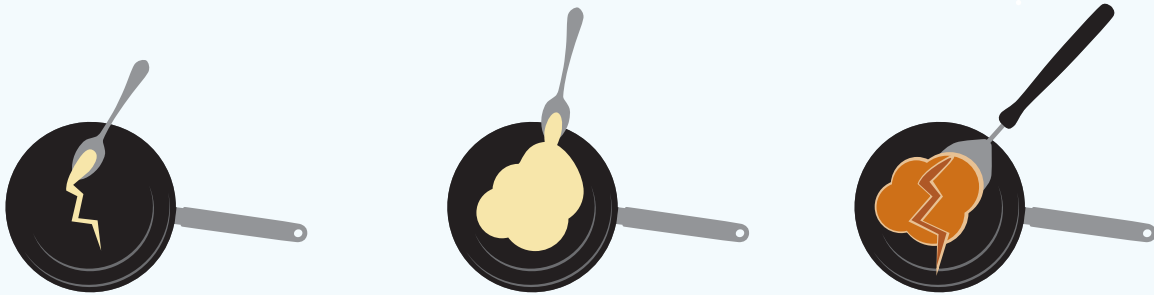
You can use a pancake mix or try this basic recipe:

1 ¼ cups flour	1 beaten egg
2 teaspoons baking powder	1 ¼ cups buttermilk (or 1 ¼ cups milk soured with 4 teaspoons lemon juice)
1 tablespoon sugar	2 tablespoons cooking oil
¼ teaspoon salt	
½ teaspoon baking soda	

Mix dry ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Combine beaten egg, milk and oil and add to dry ingredients. Stir until just mixed. Spoon batter on a lightly greased griddle or skillet. Cook until bubbly on top. Flip pancakes over and cook until lightly brown.

Pancakes don't have to be round. Take a look at the clouds in Seymour Simon's ***Weather*** or in another nonfiction weather title. When you spoon your batter onto your skillet, drip it into the shape of clouds! Spoon small drops of batter together for a puffy cumulus cloud or combine bigger drops for cumulonimbus.

You can also add lightning to your pancake cloud. Drip batter onto the skillet in a zigzag. Let your lightning cook for about a minute. Then add more batter on top of your lightning, letting it drip into a cloud shape. Cook until bubbly on top then turn it over. You should see a darker lightning shape striking right in your pancake cloud! Depending how comfortable you are with your child near a hot stove, let him try to make his own pancake shapes and hidden objects.



Add a Spoonful of Cloud

While you're in the kitchen, give your child a big metal spoon and have him breathe on the back. What happens? He should see a tiny cloud of water vapor on the spoon! Explain that this is how real clouds form too — when warm, moist air and cool air come together.

You can both learn more about how clouds form with this summary and diagram about the water cycle from the U.S. Geological Survey: <http://ga.water.usgs.gov/edu/watercyclesummary.html>. Or download this NOAA/NASA Sky Watcher Chart (http://science-edu.larc.nasa.gov/cloud_chart/PDFs/NOAA-NASA-CloudChart.pdf) and — weather permitting — head outside to identify clouds or look for other “hidden objects” in clouds when you ask your child to apply his imagination to the sky and tell you what he thinks various clouds resemble.

Two more great kid-focused sites about weather:

The Weather Channel for Kids <http://www.theweatherchannelkids.com/>

Weather Wiz Kids <http://www.weatherwizkids.com/>



Tornado Poetry

In ***Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs***, if you didn't like the days' weather, you didn't eat.

Real weather might not affect your day or your daily meals as much as the unique weather conditions of Chewandswallow, but most people do have strong feelings about weather. Some love hot, sunny days; others enjoy gentle spring rain. Some people complain about snow and cold; others dislike thunderstorms.

Talk with your child about his feelings about different types of weather. Encourage him to offer descriptions of how different types of weather look, smells, feel and sounds. Looking at nonfiction books about weather may stimulate thinking. Together, write down his ideas.

Now encourage him to use his brainstorm to create an alliterative poem about his most favorite or least favorite weather. Alliteration is the repetition of initial consonant sound in two or more neighboring words or syllables, such as "the wintry wind whistles." Talk with your child about other examples of alliteration that he's likely encountered in brand names and advertising — like Best Buy, Red Robin, Chuck E. Cheese's, Krispy Kreme — and why the alliteration helps make words and phrases memorable. Alliterative words twist the tongue and are fun to read and say! A poem full of alliteration is like a tiny tornado in your mouth.

Offer your child paper and pencil and have him write a poem that is at least five lines long and uses alliteration at least three times. Read his poem aloud or record him reading it if possible so he can appreciate the repetition of sounds and hear the quickness and intensity alliteration adds to his writing.

Waiting for the Sound of Thunder

While the sounds of a thunderstorm can be frightening for some children, most kids love to make noise of their own! Ask your child what he would do if he had the job of making special sound effects for a movie about weather. Have him gather kitchen and household items that he thinks could imitate the sounds of rain falling on the roof, wind, hail, rushing or splashing water, and thunder and lightning. Then let him make the sounds for you to see if you can correctly guess which weather effect it is. Talk with your child about what really makes the noises of weather. Is it the rain or the object the rain strikes? Does weather sound different in different places?

Variation: If you have a smart phone or tablet, let your child try to imitate weather sounds using a musical instrument app. Or use real instruments if available.

WEATHER



Featured titles

Fiction

Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs by Judi Barrett

Nonfiction

Weather by Seymour Simon

Additional fiction titles

Thunder Cake by Patricia Polacco

Bartholomew and the Oobleck by Dr. Seuss

Sector 7 by David Wiesner

Come On, Rain by Karen Hesse

Additional nonfiction titles

Weather Words and What They Mean by Gail Gibbons

Wonderful Weather by Shar Levine and Leslie Johnstone

What Will the Weather Be? by Lynda DeWitt

Oh Say Can You Say What's the Weather Today? All About Weather by Tish Rabe

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