

The Littlest Matryoshka

By Corinne Demas Bliss

This children's book tells the story of Nina, the littlest of a set of six matryoshka dolls. Her troubles begin when she is accidentally knocked off the shelf in a toyshop. Your students will be on the edge of their seats as they follow her perils until she returns to the safety of her sisters.

Following is a list of extension activities that integrate:

- listening
- sequence
- writing
- math and logic
- art

1. Read the story to your students during your read aloud period. Read the story again the following day, asking the children to pay close attention to what happens to Nina. You have various options for getting your students to sequence the story.

- You may record the sequence with the whole group on chart paper. Individual children then illustrate their own book that tells the story of Nina's travels. Children can use ordinal numbers to signal each event.

- You may pair up children who take notes while you read. Pairs of children create a book as described above.
- You may want to have your students work in small groups. Each group is responsible for sequencing the story and creating a book.
- You may have Nina write a letter Nikolai, the toy maker, describing her experience.

2. Have the children make matryoshka dolls. Here a few ideas.

- A matryoshka sock doll. Have your students cut on old white sport sock above the heel. Fill the sock with paper towel, leaving a bit of space for a layer of beans to give it some weight. (Maybe this can be a family homework project. The children can then use fabric paint to paint their matryoshka dolls.
- Papier-mâché matryoshka dolls. Have your students fill a plastic bottle with sand or salt to weigh it. Next they create a head by balling up newspaper and securing it to the top of the bottle with tape. Now they are ready to papier-mâché the bottle and paint it once it dries.
- Paper matryoshka dolls. Have your students create a set of three matryoshka dolls. They will need to decide how

tall the smallest will be and then measure out the other two using a set formula. Maybe the dolls' height will increase by one or two inches. This activity would work nicely in an art center or as independent work while you're working with a small group.

3. Have your students write a story about their dolls.
4. Nikolai, the doll maker, made a set of six matryoshka dolls. Have your students write the six times table and describe any patterns they may discover.
5. Have your students complete the logic problem featuring matryoshka dolls.