

Tough Chicks

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Teacher's Guide Created by Cassandra Reigel Whetstone

Story Summary: Penny, Polly, and Molly are three independent, tough chicks, who “Peep, peep, zoom, zip, cheep,” around the farmyard, much to the dismay of the other well-behaved inhabitants of the farm. When Farmer Fred’s truck nearly crashes into the henhouse, the tough chicks use their courage and talents to save the day.

Cece Meng writes from her home in Santa Cruz, California, where she lives with her husband, two children, three spotted rabbits, and a bird named Lulu. Learn more about her at www.cecemeng.com.

Melissa Suber illustrates children’s books from her home in southern California. Learn more about her at www.mjsuber.com.

Pre-Reading: Give each student a half sheet, (8.5in. x 5.5in.) of white paper. Tell students they have three minutes to write down everything that they know about chicks, including what chicks look like, what they eat, where they live, what sounds they make, etc. Students in K-1 may only write words while students in grades 2-3 may write phrases or sentences. When the time is up, invite students to share their ideas about chicks.

Preview words for sheltered instruction: *chick, tough, strut, mud, holler, tractor*

Discussion Questions:

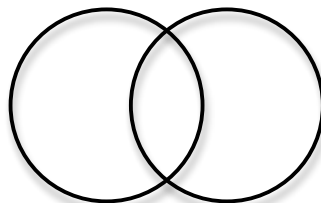
1. What does the cover tell you about these chicks? What do you think the story might be about? (*prediction*) front cover
2. Why were the hens in the henhouse unhappy with Penny, Polly, and Molly? (*literal, evaluative*) page 7
3. How do you think the animals want Penny, Polly, and Molly to behave? (*inferential, evaluative*) pages 8-9
4. How do you think Mama Hen felt when Farmer Fred told her, “Make them be good”? (*inferential*) page 11
5. Have you ever gotten your mom or dad or teacher in trouble for something that you did? (*personal experience*) page 11
6. What does Mama Hen mean when she says, “Nice form”? (*literal, evaluative*) page 15
7. Why was Farmer Fred worried when he looked at the dark clouds? (*inferential*) page 21
8. How do the other animals and Farmer Fred feel about the tough chicks at the end of the story? (*literal*) page 30-31

Shared Reading and Response to Story: Compare and Contrast Chicks

Grades: PreK- Grade 3

Materials: chart paper and marker; blank paper and pencils (grades 2-3)

Preparation: Draw a Venn Diagram on the chart. Label the first circle “Good Chicks” and the second circle “Tough Chicks.” “Good Chicks” “Tough Chicks”



Directions:

1. Tell students that you are going to reread TOUGH CHICKS and that you are going to need some help. Say, “When I read about a tough chick, I want you to say, ‘I’m tough’ and flex your muscle.” Demonstrate how to flex your bicep. Say, “When I read about what the hens and Farmer Fred consider to be good chicks, I want you to say ‘awww’ and fold your hands in your laps.”
2. Read through the story a second time and encourage students to use signals and sounds throughout the reading. At the end they may decide to do both “tough” and “good” signals on the final pages.
3. **PreK-Grade 1:** Have students help you fill in the Venn Diagram. Identify behaviors and characteristics of “Good Chicks” and “Tough Chicks.” Put words that fall into both categories in the overlapping area of the diagram. Students may bring their prior knowledge to the discussion and don’t need to be limited to only using information from the story. **Grades 2-3:** Identify behaviors and characteristics of “Good Chicks” and “Tough Chicks.” Begin to fill in the Venn Diagram as a whole class. When there are 1-2 examples in each area of the diagram, pass out blank paper and have students create a Venn diagram on their paper. Ask them to add their own ideas to each category.

Closure: PreK-Grade 1: Summarize the Venn Diagram. Ask, “Which category has the most words?” “Which has the least?” “Would you rather be a ‘good’ chick, a ‘tough’ chick, or both?” **Grades 2-3:** Have students share their Venn Diagrams and add their answers to the chart. Allow students to add shared ideas to their own chart during this discussion.

Tough Chick Footprints (Art)

Grades: PreK- Grade 3

Materials: white construction paper, 9in. x 12 in.; pencil; yellow paint and paintbrushes bucket of water; towels; orange construction paper; googly eyes or black construction paper; scissors; glue; markers or crayons

Preparation: Set up paint, paintbrushes, bucket of water, and towels in a painting area either in the classroom or outside. Write, “____ is one tough chick!” on the board.

Directions:

1. Invite students one at a time to remove one shoe and sock. Write student’s name on one side of the paper. Turn paper over. Paint student’s foot with the yellow paint and have them press their foot onto the paper. Rinse and dry foot and replace shoe. Repeat until each student has made a print.
2. When prints are dry, pass them out to the students. Have them orient the page so the heel of the foot is on the top of the paper. Tell students that the heel is the head of the chick. Provide orange construction paper, black paper or googly eyes, and have students make a beak and eyes for their chick and glue onto the print. Older students may wish to add additional details to their chicks such as clothes, helmets, etc.
3. Have students name their chick and write, “ (name of chick) is one tough chick!” on the top of their papers.
4. The art makes a nice bulletin board display under the words, “Peep, peep, zoom, zip, cheep!”

Extension: Have students write or dictate a story about their chicks on the bottom or back of their papers.

Suggested Responses: Compare and Contrast Chicks

“Tough Chicks”

“Good Chicks”

strut around the farm

wrestle worms

race bugs

dive off fences

play in mud

investigate how things work

smart rough

“different in a good way”

“Peep, peep, zoom, zip, cheep”

save the day

They are good, too!

yellow

born with wet fluff

have beaks

cute

hatch from eggs

live on a farm

quiet

preen feathers

peeps or cheeps

stay neat

hide under mama’s wing

make nests

behave properly

quietly peck grain

scratch for grain

cluck calmly