Subject Areas: English Literacy and Geography (the seven continents).

Suitable for: Pre-K, Kindergarten, and 1st grade. Also for English Language Learning (ELL)/English as a Second Language (ESL) and Special Education.

Summary:

Think of PJ as each student’s Flat Stanley for promoting outdoor play. This lesson actively engages each child in the story, character, setting, Dolch sight words, and discussion about imagination, outdoor play, and the world! Children relate to PJ, the main character of [Rebecca P. Cohen’s](http://www.amazon.com/Rebecca-P.-Cohen/e/B004FL2SI2) early reader series, PJ’s Backyard Adventures, illustrated by Marni Penning Coleman.

PJ is the essence of every child: curious and full of wonder. He loves to wear his pajamas, fireman’s hat, and boots. PJ travels the world in his imagination outside to real places kids love. There are eight ways children can interact with each book, from coloring to finding a Dolch sight word hidden playfully in each illustration, decorating their own pj’s, hat, and boots, tracing letters, and drawing and writing about where their imagination can take them. [Book 1](http://www.amazon.com/PJs-Backyard-Adventures-Who-PJ/dp/0989282279) contains 16 Dolch sight words. [Book 2](http://www.amazon.com/PJs-Backyard-Adventures-Paris-Playground/dp/0996807101) contains 24 Dolch sight words. According to Early Literacy and Learning Specialist Bonnie Lee Nicholls, this series provides to children and parents what research has shown gets kids excited about and successful with reading and writing:

"This series has very thoughtfully been designed with children and how they learn in mind! Learning to read is not only about taking the time to practice with words, it’s important for young readers to truly relate to a story and to have time to connect their experiences to reading, to talking, and to writing through play. Every child uses their imagination to play, and in this way, every child can imagine alongside PJ in his outdoor adventures, making the reading experience (and therefore the words being read) more meaningful. This series creates multiple opportunities for children to practice reading common words found in picture books in a playful way which will support their early reading efforts. Additionally, PJ demonstrates for children that through their own play scenarios, like PJ, they too are story tellers and when they write about their play adventures they become story writers! These are powerful messages that are so crucial to instill in young children in order to strengthen their skills as story readers, storytellers, and story writers! I just love this series!"

- [Bonnie Lee Nicholls](http://www.bonnieleenicholls.com/)

In this lesson, the teacher reads PJ’s Backyard Adventures to the class with active discussion of pajamas, outdoor play, boots, where PJ goes in his imagination, and where students can go in their imaginations too. The story and discussion can be followed by these free printables for children and classrooms enjoy from Rebecca P. Cohen’s website [BeOutsideAndGrow.com](http://www.beoutsideandgrow.com/):

* Each student [cuts out PJ](http://media.wix.com/ugd/5588b5_86eb55df08904b92a84414e1c0d4b0a4.pdf) to take outside for imaginative play.
* Each student [colors the Book #2 playground cover](http://media.wix.com/ugd/5588b5_3e36135254874d69b83f51bcb20f7e93.pdf) and hides letters and/or words in their pictures.

Author Rebecca P. Cohen has done this lesson with nearly 1,000 children from preschool to 1st grade, modifying the discussion and follow up activity as appropriate for each group’s ages.

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| **Lesson Elements** |  |
| **Topics** | Outdoor Play  Imagination  The World and the Seven Continents  Relating to a Character in a Story  Storytelling  Dolch Sight Words  Coloring and Drawing  Role Play - friendship and help outside  Storywriting |
| **Enduring Understandings** | Listening to stories and linking themes to speaking, drawing, writing, and crafts about outdoor play, imagination, and the world.  Finding hidden letters and words; practice hiding in their pictures. |
| **Essential Questions** | Who likes to wear their pajamas? What do your pajamas look like?  Where is PJ’s hat? What type of hat does PJ wear?  Where are PJ’s boots? What color are his boots? Who likes to wear their boots? What color are your boots?  What do you like to do outside?  When you think of an adventure, what do you think of?  What does the word imagination mean?  Where does PJ go in his imagination?  Where can your imagination take you?  Would you like to cut out PJ and take him outside?  What letters or words can you hide in your picture? |
| **Standards** | **Kindergarten**1The kindergarten student will be immersed in a print-rich environment to develop oral language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and an appreciation for literature….The kindergarten student will have the opportunity to use words that describe people, places, and events. The student will recognize and print letters of the alphabet, use the basic phonetic principles of identifying and writing beginning sounds, identify story elements, and communicate ideas through pictures and writing. 1*English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools - January 2010*  **Grade One**2 Reading is the priority in first grade. The student will be immersed in a print-rich environment to develop oral language skills, phonetic skills, vocabulary, comprehension, and an awareness of print materials as sources of information and enjoyment. The student will use listening and speaking skills to participate in classroom discussions. The student will use a variety of strategies to read new words and will read familiar selections with fluency and expression. The student will continue to develop an understanding of character, setting, main idea, and story sequence in a variety of texts. The student will increase vocabulary and comprehension strategies by reading across the curriculum, with emphasis on materials that reflect the Standards of Learning in mathematics, science, and history and social science. The student will also demonstrate comprehension of fiction and nonfiction texts through classroom discussion and will begin to communicate ideas in writing. 2 *English Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools - January 2010* |
| **Content Objectives** | As prompted, each student describes verbally how he or she relates to outdoor play, imagination, the world around them.  On each page, children look to see where the sight word highlighted in the sentence is hidden in the illustration. |
| **Language Objectives** | Each student describes verbally how he or she relates to PJ (e.g. pajamas, boots), outdoor play, imagination, and the world around them.  Practice recognizing Dolch Sight Words. |
| **Key Vocabulary** | Book 1 Dolch Sight Words (16):  and, asks, his, in, is, of, old, one, opens, plays, puts, sees, the, three, to, two  Book 2 Dolch Sight Words (24):  all, and, as, big, can, do, down, go, help, it like, little, on, one, plays, thank, that, this, three, two, up, we, you, your |
| **Materials** | PJ’s Backyard Adventures Book 1 [Who is PJ?](http://www.amazon.com/PJs-Backyard-Adventures-Who-PJ/dp/0989282279) or/and  PJ’s Backyard Adventures Book 2 [Play at a Paris Playground](http://www.amazon.com/PJs-Backyard-Adventures-Paris-Playground/dp/0996807101) |
| **Plan for Differentiation/ Accommodation / Adaptation** | A special education teacher allowed her students to wear their pajamas to school. The teacher read the book and had brought in to school a ball that was a globe. After the story, the students stood in a circle and found a place on the globe they would want to go to in their imagination. |
| **Formative or Summative** | Formative |
| **Home School Connection** | Find where you live on a globe.  Find other countries on a globe (if applicable, where else the student has been or would like to go).  If not yet able to write, have the student tell a story to an adult (who can write it down) “Where could your pjs and imagination take you?” |