



Sensory Stories: The Hungry Caterpillar



What you will need:

- We are showing you how to make a sensory story; we are using the Hungry Caterpillar, but you can use any story you enjoy.
- Caterpillar
- Leaf
- Fruit
- Butterfly
- Cocoon
- Sun
- Switch (if you have one)



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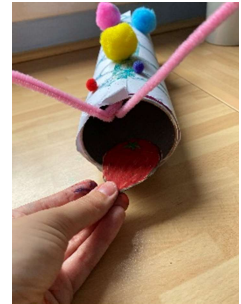
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How to make the game



- **Caterpillar:** if you have a caterpillar toy you can use this, or using a kitchen roll tube, or a pringle tub decorate it with paint, pens, glitter, pom poms etc. The good thing about using a tube is that you can get them to feed the caterpillar throughout the story as it makes it way through the fruit. You can also stuff a sock so they have something they can squish and feel.



- **Sun:** you can make a sun by colouring in a piece of paper, or use a flash light to show how bright it is, you can also use a hair dryer (on the coldest setting), or a luke-warm hot water bottle, to discuss the heat of the sun
- **Leaf:** you can use real leaves if you can find them, making sure to dry them out so they can crinkle them. Or using cardboard draw a leaf and colour it in. You can even buy leaf essence oil so you can put this on the leaf to give them the experience of the smell.



- **Fruit:** it is best to use real fruit if you can, this way you can explore the fruits texture, smell and taste alongside the caterpillar, you can even change the story to fit their likes and dislikes. If you don't want to use real food, just draw the fruit onto cardboard, colour in and cut out. Again, you can buy the fruit essence oil so they can still explore the smell. If you have plastic fruit toys you can use these too.

• **Butterfly:** if you have butterfly toys you can use these, if not draw them on paper and cut them out, or use tissue paper or cellophane to make them colourful. The good thing about using paper butterflies is you can use a fan, hairdryer (on lowest and coolest setting) or blowing on them to get them to fly about like a butterfly would do. If they have fairy wings you can even turn them into the Butterfly.

- **Cocoon:** using a blanket you can wrap them up in it to make them feel like they are in a cocoon just like the



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caterpillar. If you want the toy caterpillar to go in a cocoon you can place in a bag you can seal or wrap in clingfilm. You can even use silly string to give them the sticky texture to explore.

- **Switch:** if you have a switch it is great to record the recurring phrase of “And he was still hungry”, getting them to press it when it comes up in the story. If you don’t have a switch but still want this experience, you can record on your phone, and press play (this can be a little more difficult for those with limited movement)
- **Doing the story:** once you have all the items ready to go, you can go through the story at a slow pace, giving them time to explore the items as you go. If they enjoy something more than another let them keep exploring, giving them control over their experience. As we said we have used the Hungry Caterpillar as an example so you can use any story that you know they will enjoy. If you aren’t sure how to turn the story into a sensory experience you can contact the early years team and we can help!
- **Outdoors:** the great thing about sensory stories is they can be done out in the garden or on the move. Go looking for the leaves, caterpillars, and butterflies. Take them to the shop to get the fruit, make it an in-life experience.

Benefits

- Sensory stories allow the person or persons to be fully immersed in the reading experience. It allows those with sensory needs to include all their senses in a story, making stories more accessible.
- Turn taking: sensory stories can encourage turn taking, like passing the items back and forth between siblings etc.
- Timing: if you use the switch this can encourage them to recognise timing in the story, pressing it at the right moment.
- Anticipation: using the switch can allow them to anticipate what comes next, also the butterflies and blowing them about can cause anticipation, especially if you count down before you blow them.
- Encouraging sensory exploration.
- Intensive interaction: sensory stories provide an intense session for the person delivering the story and the person interacting with it. It allows you to



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explore their likes and dislikes, how they respond to the experience, and builds trust as you recognise and respond to their feelings and emotions throughout the experience.

- Control: exploring your senses can be a scary experience, especially when it is something new. So, encourage them, whilst also allowing them to pull back or explore longer or shorter, this gives them control and lets them build confidence in exploring.



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