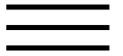Can I say 'Once upon a time'?: Kindergarten children developing knowledge of information book language.

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"Can I say 'Once Upon a Time'?": Kindergarten children developing knowledge of information book language

Nell K. Duke ⧑ ... Jane Kays

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Abstract

In recent years, many scholars have called for greater inclusion of expository texts in early schooling. A first step in assessing the wisdom of these calls is to examine what young children actually know, and can learn, about the language of these reputedly-difficult texts. This study provides information about 20 preliterate kindergartners' knowledge of one genre of expository text, information books, at two points in time—in September, when the children first entered kindergarten, and in December, after children had spent 3 months in a classroom in which information books were read aloud on a near-daily basis. Children's pretend readings of an unfamiliar wordless information book in September contained key features of information book language: their December readings contained far greater use of these features, and among more children. These young children's fast-developing knowledge of information book

language provides one indication that inclusion of such texts in early schooling may be well-advised.

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