



## Lesson: Sarah Had a Little Lamb

(To follow Amplify CKLA K, Knowledge 1: Nursery Rhymes and Fables, Lesson 4B: Little Miss Muffet)

### At a Glance

In this lesson, students investigate the structure and origins of “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” a classic nursery rhyme written by New Hampshire’s Sarah Josepha Hale.

### Primary Focus Objectives

- Students will identify main characters, details, and events in a classic nursery rhyme.
- Students will listen to non-fiction text about Sarah Josepha Hale.
- Students will use cause-and-effect knowledge to create their own version of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”.
- Students will discuss and brainstorm the purpose of rules inside and outside of the classroom.

### Formative Assessment

- “Who Followed You to School?” activity

### Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3

With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.5c

Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., note places at school that are colorful).

### Materials

- Focus Text: “Mary Had a Little Lamb”
- Rhyme Pair Cards
- Vocabulary Cards: poem, fleece, eager, patiently, lingered, rule
- Focus Text Facts: Sarah Josepha Hale
- “Who Followed You to School?” worksheet
- [Candia School, 19th century](#)
- [Mason Explains: One-Room Schoolhouses](#)
- Comparing Schools Venn diagram

### Time Needed

Two to three 30-40 minute class sessions

### Learning Activity

1. **Read the Focus Text.** Project and read aloud the poem, “Mary Had a Little Lamb.” Highlight the rhyme scheme and pairs, using the provided rhyme pair cards. Encourage students to recite parts they know. As a whole group, identify the setting, characters, and events in the poem. (20 minutes)



2. **Discuss Vocabulary Cards.** Project or show the vocabulary cards. Challenge students to act out the meanings as you discuss them. *(15 minutes)*
3. **Read Focus Text Facts:** Explain to students that this classic nursery rhyme was written by a person from New Hampshire. Project or distribute "Sarah Josepha Hale." Read and discuss the content with students. *(5 minutes)*

This is a good place to pause if dividing the lesson across multiple sessions.

4. **Complete Mason's Challenge.** Read the poem aloud again. Then, distribute the "Who Followed You to School?" worksheet and challenge students to create their own version. *(20 minutes)*
5. **Compare schools.** This poem was published in 1830 and describes a lamb entering a schoolhouse. What was school like back then? Look at the photo of a schoolroom in Candia and watch the video. Discuss and record similarities and differences. *(20 minutes)*



## Educator Rationale and Answer Guide

<b>Connection to Amplify</b>	In this lesson, students read the poem "Mary Had a Little Lamb." They will learn about cause and effect and the characters and events that take place in the poem. They also gain background knowledge about the poem that can deepen their understanding and connection to the text. Phonemic awareness work can also be done with looking at rhyme and word patterns. Many of the activities suggested in this lesson can be repeated with other nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes help students build rhythmic language, syntax, and pattern understanding.
<b>Read the Focus Text</b>	Read aloud the poem "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Ask students what they notice about the poem. Highlight the rhyme scheme and the patterns of the children's reactions. The poem is arranged in stanzas, chunks of lines that go together. The first stanza's rhyme pattern is different than the others. It has an ABCB rhyme pattern, whereas the other two stanzas have an ABAB pattern. Try clapping the number of syllables in each line. Acting out the poem helps them to internalize the story and sequence of events. Learning to recite the poem will help the students remember the order and sequence of events. Recitation is good for memory practice.
<b>Vocabulary</b>	The poem introduces several vocabulary words that might be unfamiliar to the students. Students can draw pictures or act the words to help increase familiarity with the terms. They can also think of synonyms that will help make connections to the words.
<b>Read Focus Text Facts</b>	Sarah Josepha Hale, who was born and raised in Newport, New Hampshire, was one of the most famous women in 19th-century America. This background information helps students understand that while nursery rhymes often sound silly, they are created by real people and often inspired by real events.
<b>Complete Mason's Challenge</b>	This part of the lesson can act as the formative assessment. By making their own version of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," students demonstrate their understanding of the cause-and-effect theme of the poem, the characters, and the sequence of events, as well as an ability to make inferences and connections to the text.
<b>Compare classrooms</b>	This exercise develops historical thinking skills. Students may notice where the students sit compared to where they sit in their classroom. They may also notice decorations, blackboard, and how the students are dressed. Watch the "Mason Explains: One-Room Schoolhouses" video for more detail about this topic. Then, have a whole group discussion about the differences between school today and school long ago. Use the Venn diagram organize student suggestions about similarities and differences.



## Mary Had a Little Lamb

By Sarah Josepha Hale

Mary had a little lamb,  
Its fleece was white as snow;  
And everywhere that Mary went  
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,  
Which was against the rule;  
It made the children laugh and play  
To see a lamb at school.

And so the teacher turned it out,  
But still it lingered near,  
And waited patiently about  
Till Mary did appear.

Why does the lamb love Mary so?  
The eager children cry;  
Why, Mary loves the lamb, you know,  
The teacher did reply.



## Rhyme Pair Cards

**snow**

**go**

**day**

**play**

**rule**

**school**

**out**

**about**

**near**

**appear**

**so**

**know**

**cry**

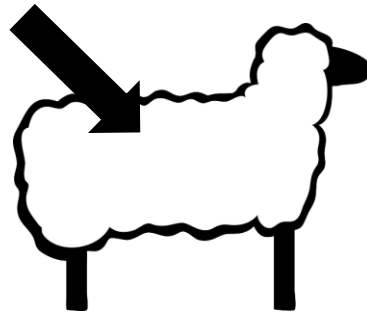
**reply**



# ***FLEECE***

**Definition:** The wool of an animal, like a sheep or a goat

**How to use it:** The **fleece** of the sheep was used to make yarn.





# ***LINGERED***

**Definition:** To stay longer than expected

**How to use it:** He **lingered** at the birthday party because he was having so much fun he didn't want to leave.



# ***PATIENTLY***

**Definition:** To do something without frustration or anger

**How to use it:** We waited **patiently** in the long line.





# ***EAGER***

**Definition:** Wanting to do something a lot

**How to use it:** We were **eager** for the birthday party to begin.



# ***RULE***

**Definition:** An idea that explains what you should or should not do to keep things safe and fair

**How to use it:** In our house, it is a **rule** that you must put away a toy or game before starting something new.



## Sarah Josepha Hale

### Author of "Mary Had a Little Lamb"



Credit: Portrait of Sarah Josepha Hale,  
New Hampshire Historical Society

Sarah was also a teacher. She taught children in her home. One day, a student's pet lamb followed her right into the classroom! Sarah was inspired to write a poem about what happened.



Credit: "My Playmate," Library of Congress

Sarah Josepha Hale was born in 1788 in Newport, New Hampshire. Unlike many girls who lived at that time, Sarah went to school and learned many things. She became a famous magazine editor and even convinced President Abraham Lincoln to make Thanksgiving a national holiday.



Credit: "The New Schoolmistress," Library of Congress

She called the poem "Mary Had a Little Lamb." She published it in a book of poems for children. It became so popular it was set to music. Sarah continued to write about things that were important to her for the rest of her life.



## Mason's Challenge

Try writing your own version of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." What kind of animal might follow you to school? What would you do? How would other people react?



## Who Followed You to School?

What kind of animal might follow you to school? What would you do? How would other people react?

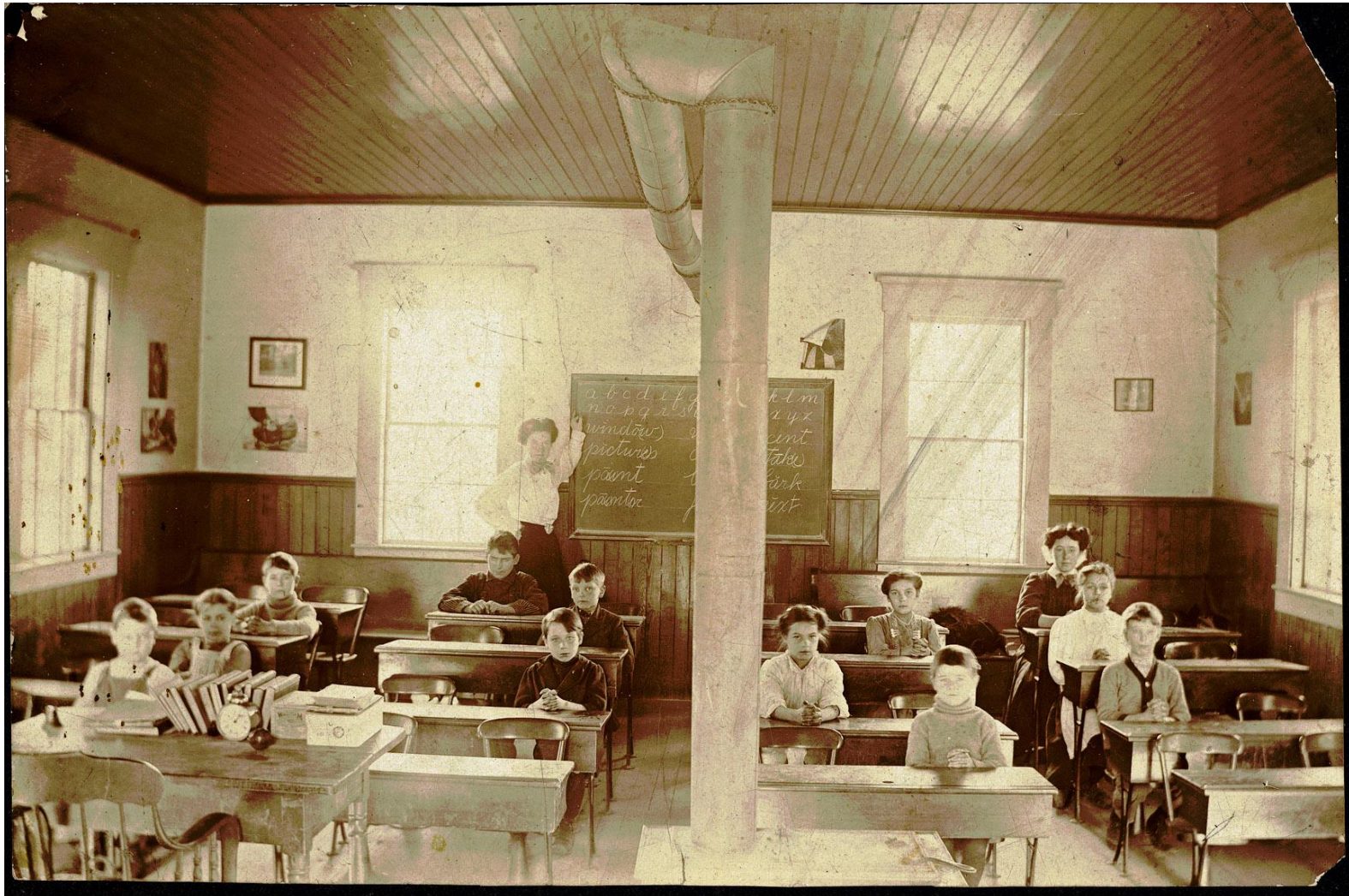
\_\_\_\_\_ **had a little** \_\_\_\_\_.  
(your name) (animal)

Draw what happens next.





## School in Candia, New Hampshire, in the 1800s



Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



## Comparing Schools

schools today

schools long ago

