

DIRECTOR'S LESSON PACKAGE OVERVIEW

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

K–2 Literacy Package — Informed by 4-H STEM Reading Connections 2025

Created by Helix Education in partnership with Beyond School Bells

FOR

Program directors, site coordinators, and lead educators

USE

Background knowledge, standards alignment, materials planning, and reporting data to implement this 3-lesson unit

FRONTLINE EDUCATORS

Should use the Grab & Go Lesson Package

Unit Overview

This three-lesson unit uses ***It Looked Like Spilt Milk*** by Charles G. Shaw as the anchor text for an integrated K–2 literacy and STEAM experience. The book uses a single repeating sentence pattern to show how one white cloud shape can look like many different things, inviting readers to use imagination and observation together. This theme of **imagination, observation, and wonder** runs through every lesson.

Lesson-at-a-Glance

#	Lesson Focus	Lesson Overview	SOR Skill	STEAM Activity
1	Introducing the Story & Phonemic Awareness	Students are introduced to the book and the concept of pareidolia — how imagination finds familiar shapes in random forms. The lesson builds foundational literacy through phonemic awareness using cloud and weather words from the story.	Phonemic Awareness (rhyming K, Elkonin Boxes 1st, phoneme substitution 2nd)	Students go outside to observe real clouds, completing two drawings: a scientific observation and an imagination drawing, just like the book.
2	Shared Reading & Vocabulary Exploration	Students use the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine to explore four key words (silhouette, observe, imagine, transform). They participate in a shared reading with vocabulary stops, then create silhouette art using light, shadow, and black paper on blue background.	Vocabulary in context (4-step vocabulary routine)	Students create silhouette art (dark shapes on light backgrounds or vice versa) using flashlights, cut paper, or windows, connecting light science to the book's artistic technique.
3	Reader's Theater & Cloud Imagination Art	Students retell the story shapes in sequence and perform a Reader's Theater script adapted from the	Fluency: expression, Reader's Theater, mystery and wonder voice	Students retell shapes from the story; perform a Reader's Theater script; paint original white cloud shapes on

#	Lesson Focus	Lesson Overview	SOR Skill	STEAM Activity
		book. They then paint their own white cloud shapes on blue paper and label them using the book's sentence pattern.		blue paper and label with the book's sentence pattern.

Nebraska ELA Standards Alignment

Grade	Literary Text (Reading)	Science of Reading Focus
K	LA.K.RP With adult help, retell stories with details and identify the main message.	LA.K.F.2.b Recognize and produce rhyming words. (L1) LA.K.F.4 Read smoothly and correctly with expression. (L3)
1st	LA.1.RP.1 Retell a story using important details.	LA.1.F.2.a Segment and blend phonemes in words. (L1) LA.1.F.3 Read grade-level text accurately and fluently with expression. (L3)
2nd	LA.2.RP.1 Retell stories and explain the important lessons within them.	LA.2.F.2.a Manipulate phonemes (substitution) to build new words. (L1) LA.2.F.3 Read grade-level text accurately, fluently, and with expression. (L3)

Lesson Structure

Each lesson is designed for **60 minutes** in an out-of-school time (OST) setting. The timing below is flexible and can be adjusted based on your group's needs. The full lesson includes welcome and closing time, which can be removed if already included in your programming. For programs that prefer to divide lessons into literacy and project days, see the recommended split structure on the right.

Standard 60-Minute Lesson	Time
Welcome & Check-In	5 min
Activate Prior Knowledge	5 min
Science of Reading Mini Lesson	10 min
Read Aloud or Shared Reading	15 min
STEAM Activity	20 min
Closing & Celebration	5 min

Divided Lesson Structure

Day 1 – Literacy Focus

Lesson Component	Time
Welcome & Check-In	5 min
Activate Prior Knowledge	5 min
Science of Reading Mini Lesson	10+ min
Read Aloud or Shared Reading	15 min

Day 2 – STEAM Project

Lesson Component	Time
Welcome & Check-In	5 min
Activate Prior Knowledge	5 min
STEAM Activity	30+ min
Closing & Celebration	5 min

Lesson Modifications

Each lesson contains modifications throughout for grade-level specific modifications (Kindergarten, First, and Second), along with modifications for Emerging and Advanced students.

Emerging	Emerging Learner An emerging learner is just beginning to develop foundational literacy or numeracy skills and relies heavily on hands-on manipulatives, visual cues, and direct adult support.
Advanced	Advanced Learner An advanced learner quickly grasps new concepts and can independently apply them to different tasks or creative projects without needing step-by-step instructions. They often show curiosity beyond the basic lesson, using more descriptive language or complex logic to solve problems and explain their thinking.

Literacy Background & Staff Preparation Guide

This unit integrates three Science of Reading skills across three lessons — phonemic awareness, vocabulary in context, and fluency. The sections below give you the background knowledge to understand each skill, run the activity yourself, and prepare your staff. **You do not need a teaching degree to facilitate these lessons effectively.**

Lesson 1 — Phonemic Awareness

What it is	Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and work with the sound structure of spoken language—including syllables, rhymes, and individual phonemes. Phonemic awareness is a subset focused specifically on individual sounds (phonemes), entirely by ear, not by sight. It is one of the strongest early predictors of reading success. It is not about letters or spelling; it is purely about sound.
Why it matters	Students who can hear and manipulate sounds are better able to decode unfamiliar words and spell. Research shows phonemic awareness is best taught explicitly and playfully, and rhyming is one of the earliest and most powerful entry points.
Skills in this unit	Kindergarten: Rhyming: Recognizing and producing words that share the same ending sound. Activity: Thumbs up/down for rhyming pairs from the story — milk/silk, cloud/loud, bird/heard, sky/fly, rain/train. 1st Grade: Elkonin Boxes: Segmenting a word into its individual sounds by pushing a counter into a box for each phoneme heard. The word "milk" has 4 letters and 4 sounds: /m/-/i/-/l/-/k/ = 4 boxes. 2nd Grade: Phoneme Substitution: Swapping one sound for another to build a new word. Example: Change /m/ in "milk" to /s/ → "silk." Change /r/ in "rain" to /p/ → "pain."
How to run Elkonin Boxes	1. Draw or print 3–4 connected boxes on paper (one row per word). Laminated sheets can be reused. 2. Place small objects (coins, chips, beans) above the boxes, one per box. 3. Say the word slowly. As you say each sound out loud, push one object down into a box from left to right. 4. Count the objects in the boxes to confirm the number of sounds. Key rule: Count sounds, not letters. "Milk" = /m/ /i/ /l/ /k/ = 4 sounds, 4 boxes. "Rain" = /r/ /ā/ /n/ = 3 sounds, 3 boxes.
Director try-it	Practice segmenting these words before the lesson, say each sound aloud as you push a counter: • "milk" → /m/ /i/ /l/ /k/ = 4 sounds (m - i - l - k) • "cloud" → /k/ /l/ /ow/ /d/ = 4 sounds (k - l - ow - d) • "rain" → /r/ /ā/ /n/ = 3 sounds (r - ay - n)

What to tell staff	"For K, use picture cards and make rhyming feel like a game — thumbs up/down, silly rhyming sentences, and call-and-response. For 1st grade, model Elkonin Boxes yourself first, always saying sounds aloud as you push. Never spell the word — sounds only. For 2nd grade, notice that many sound-swap words connect to the weather theme."
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Lesson 2 — Vocabulary in Context

What it is	Vocabulary in context means using surrounding text and pictures to figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word, rather than giving students a definition before they encounter it. This mirrors how skilled readers naturally build vocabulary. This is completed in lesson 2, so students have heard the story and its repeating pattern in lesson 1.
Why it matters	Vocabulary is the bridge between decoding (sounding out words) and comprehension (understanding what you read). OST settings are uniquely positioned for vocabulary development because conversation and exploration are less restricted than during the school day.
Words in this unit	Silhouette — The dark shape or outline of something seen against a lighter background. Every shape in the book is a silhouette — white on blue, no details inside. Connect: Have you ever seen a cloud observation that surprised you? Observe — To watch or study something very carefully, using your senses to notice details others might miss. Imagine — When wind or water slowly wears away rock or soil over a very long time. Count the syllables: e-ro-sion = 3!
Teaching strategy	Model the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine (Say It → Define It → Connect It → Use It) aloud before students try: 1. SAY IT: Say the word aloud together with expression. USE IT: Students respond at their grade level (act it out, sentence frame, or write). 2. DEFINE IT: Give a student-friendly definition. Connect to the story. 3. CONNECT IT: Ask students to connect the word to their own life or experience. 4. USE IT: Students respond at their grade level — act it out, sentence frame, or write.
Grade-level practice	K: K: Make a shape with your body and freeze! Tell a partner: "My silhouette looks like ____." the 1st: 1st: Complete: "A silhouette is ____ because ____." 2nd: 2nd: Write: "I could see the silhouette of ____ when ____."
What to tell staff	"Don't give students the definition first, let them be word detectives. "Give every word a gesture. Silhouette — trace your outline with hands. Observe — frame eyes like binoculars. Imagine — close eyes and tap temple. Transform — spin around slowly. Students who move while learning vocabulary retain it better."

Lesson 3 — Reader's Theater Fluency

What it is	Reader's Theater is a research-supported fluency strategy where students read from a script using their voices to convey character and meaning. It builds reading rate, accuracy, expression, and prosody. It Looked Like Spilt Milk is ideal because its repeating sentence pattern gives students a predictable scaffold and repeated practice.
Why it matters	When students perform text rather than just read it, expression comes naturally, and comprehension deepens. OST settings are ideal for Reader's Theater because the low-stakes performance context makes repeated reading feel fun, not remedial.
Roles in this unit	All Group / Cloud (K): K students participate in the 'All' group lines or take the Cloud role with support. Focus on expression over accuracy — all attempts are celebrated. Named Role (1st): Students take on a named role (Narrator 1 or 2, or the Cloud). Focus on reading with a clear, expressive voice matched to the mystery of the story. Named Role + Original Line (2nd): After the first performance, students add one original line to the script in the correct sentence pattern and read it aloud.
Director try-it	Try this yourself before performing: "Sometimes it looked like a Rabbit. But it wasn't a Rabbit. It was just a cloud in the sky."

	Read it flatly. Then read it with mystery and wonder. That contrast is exactly what students are practicing. <i>"Sometimes... it looked like a Rabbit!"</i> Model both versions for staff before the lesson.
Reader's Theater script	The Reader's Theater script adapts the book's repeating pattern into 4 roles: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, the Cloud, and All. Print one copy per student. Assign roles or rotate so every student performs. The script includes an optional 'Your Turn' section where students add their own cloud shape line.
What to tell staff	"Model both the flat robotic read and the expressive version before students start. Say: 'Narrators use a steady, wondering voice full of mystery. The Cloud speaks with delight. When everyone reads together, make it feel like the whole sky is speaking.' Keep it playful — if students want to re-perform with switched roles, let them."

Grant & Reporting Data

This unit supports the following reporting categories for **21st CCLC and similar OST grant programs**:

- **21st CCLC Program Quality:** Literacy enrichment aligned to Nebraska ELA standards (K–2). Each lesson targets grade-level reading standards in literary text, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and writing from a mentor text.
- **STEAM Integration:** Science + Math + Observation (L1: Cloud Observation Science), Visual Art + Science + Creative Expression (L2: Light & Shadow Silhouette Art), Art + Science + Creative Expression (L3: Cloud Imagination Art). All activities align to ELG Standard M.02.
- **School-Day Alignment:** Phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and fluency instruction mirrors the Nebraska Science of Reading framework at each grade level. This unit reinforces, not replaces, school-day instruction.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Grade-level modifications are built into every lesson for K, 1st, and 2nd grade learners in a multi-grade OST setting, supporting both emerging and advanced learners.

Recommended Documentation

If your program is collecting impact and student data, the following options are recommended:

- Photograph completed STEAM projects (Square Sculptures, Nature Observation Drawings, Mysteries of Nature)
- Collect student Check-In Forms to document character development and behavioral tiered data
- Note which grade-level Science of Reading activities were implemented
- Record attendance for each of the 3 sessions
- Optional: Have students write one sentence about what they learned for a portfolio artifact

Materials & Budget Planning

All materials for this unit are intentionally chosen to be **low-cost and easy to source**. Most items are everyday classroom or household supplies. Where a standard item may not be available, substitutions are listed — nearly every material in this unit has a free or no-cost alternative. The **Student Materials and Printables** package includes all printable items needed per student.

Material	Quantity	Lesson	Substitution / Notes
It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw	1 per class	All	Free library copy or YouTube read-aloud
Helix K-2 Check-In Forms	1 per student	L1, L2	Draw simple faces on sticky notes; post feelings chart on board
Clipboards + blank white paper (2 sheets per student)	1 set per student	L1	Cloud Observation Science drawings (L1)

Black construction paper + scissors	1 per student	L1	Light & Shadow Silhouette Art (L2)
White paper	1 per student	L1, L3	Any available white paper
Scissors, glue, crayons/markers	1 per student or shared	L1, L3	Share supplies across groups
Elkonin Box sheets (1st grade)	1 per student	L1	Draw 3 boxes on any paper
Counters/coins (1st grade)	Set per student	L1	Bingo chips, buttons, beans, or ripped paper
Blue construction paper or cardstock	1 per student	L2	1 per student for Cloud Imagination Art (L3)
Clipboards	1 per student	L2	Use any notebook or binder; draw on any paper
Reader's Theater script (Mon–Sun)	1 per student pair	L3	Displayed during L3 fluency and art
Vocabulary word cards (medium, carve, silhouette, observe, imagine, transform)	1 per student	L3	Print large for whole-group display or one set per student
Watering can / small cups + portable fan (L3)	1 set per student	L3	For rain and wind simulation in Reader's Theater performance
Whiteboards (optional)	1 per student	L1	Use for SOR whiteboard activities
Printed Reader's Theater script (1 per student)	1 set per student	L2	Fold in half; assign roles in advance (L3)

Director's Prep Guide

The following provides an overview of prep for the full unit and itemized prep for each day. This can be completed by a director or site coordinator, or assigned to a staff member who receives prep time.

BEFORE THE UNIT BEGINS (ALL 3 LESSONS)

- Obtain a copy of *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw.
- Print required items:** Helix Daily Check-In Form (2 copies per student — L1 and L2), Vocabulary Word Cards (1 set for display, L2), printed Reader's Theater script (1 per student, L3). Optional: cloud type reference chart (L1), silhouette art examples (L2 L2), Retelling Picture Cards (1 set per group, L3), Optional: images of cloud type reference chart (L1), printed silhouette art examples (L2ey Rock, and Toadstool Geological Park (L3 L3). Optional: cloud type reference chart (L1), silhouette art examples (L2meral land art (1–4 per class, L1).
- Organize grade-specific Science of Reading materials.** K: Set out rhyming picture card pairs (milk/silk, cloud/loud, bird/heard). 1st: Print Elkonin Boxes and review instructions. 2nd: Prepare whiteboards and markers.e Cards (L1). 1st: Print Elkonin Boxes and review instructions. 2nd: Prepare whiteboards and markers or paper.
- Identify a safe outdoor area for cloud observation (L1). Choose and test your silhouette method for L2 (flashlight, cut paper, or window). Print and fold Reader's Theater scripts for L3. an outdoor space for L1 cloud observation (L1). Choose and test silhouette method for L2.
- Secure supplies for each lesson:** L1 – Natural materials (rocks, leaves, sticks, pinecones, grass), camera/tablet for photos, optional community mural photos. L2 – Blue construction paper or cardstock, small cups, water, mixing sticks, brushes/Q-tips, observation sheets. L3 – Baking pans with layered gravel/sand/soil, small cups/watering cans, portable fan, tablecloths/trays; optional clay or playdough.
- Print and fold Reader's Theater scripts (1 per student). Prepare paint stations: small cups of white paint and 1 sheet of blue paper per student. Assign roles in advance.I small cups with a set amount of water. Set up a splash zone (tablecloths or trays to catch overflow).
- Optional: Create teacher examples of STEAM projects.

LESSON 1 CLASSROOM PREP – DAY OF

- Write “today’s target rhyming words on the board: milk/silk, cloud/loud, bird/heard, sky/fly, rain/train.
- Set out Check-In Forms per student.
- K: Set out rhyming picture card pairs. 1st grade only: Draw 3–4 Elkonin boxes on chart paper.
- Write today’s target syllable words on the board: na-ture, beau-ti-ful, art-ist, wa-ter-fall, but-ter-fly.
- 1st grade: Review Elkonin Boxes instructions to familiarize with the concept.

LESSON 2 CLASSROOM PREP – DAY OF

- Set up your silhouette method (Options A–D). If using Option A: test light source and paper placement. Set out black paper, scissors, blue background paper, and glue sticks.
- Write the vocabulary words on the board: Silhouette, Observe, Imagine, Transform.
- Print or pre-write sentence frame strips for 1st grade (“The word ____ means ____ because in the book it shows ____.”).
- Set out mini whiteboards and dry-erase markers for 2nd grade. Pre-write sentence frame strips for 1st grade. Pre-label paint cups with color name for emerging learners.
- Bookmark specific pages in It Looked Like Spilt Milk for shared reading stops.

LESSON 3 CLASSROOM PREP – DAY OF

- Set up Reader’s Theater scripts (1 per student). Prepare paint stations: small cups of white paint + blue paper per student. Assign roles in advance. ps of water and watering cans at each station. Prep tablecloths or trays under each pan.
- Write the fluency sentence strip on the board: “Nature paints with sunsets, carves with water, and weaves with wind.”
- Print and cut retelling picture cards (wind, water, ice, animals, plants) for story retelling activity.
- Display photos of Chimney Rock, the Grand Canyon, Scottsbluff, and Toadstool Geological Park on the board or printed on cardstock.
- Optional: Set out clay or playdough at a separate station for L3 landmark sculpting extension.
- Option: Prepare a “Before and After” visual worksheet for emerging students to draw the landscape before and after water is poured.

FOR SCHOOL-BASED LEADERSHIP

It Looked Like Spilt Milk — K–2 Literacy & STEAM Unit

A share-out for principals, superintendents, and school-based partners

Developed by: Helix Education in partnership with Beyond School Bells, informed by 4-H STEM Reading Connections 2025. Designed for K–2 students in out-of-school time (OST) settings.

Purpose: This 3-lesson unit uses *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw as an anchor text for integrated literacy and STEAM instruction.

What Students Are Doing

Over three 60-minute sessions, students engage with *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw, a 1947 picture book using a single repeating pattern to invite imagination — showing how the same white cloud shape can look like a rabbit, a bird, a tree, and more. This theme of **curiosity and wonder** connects literacy, science, and art into a cohesive three-lesson unit.

#	Literacy Skill	STEAM Project	What Students Learn & Do
1	Phonemic Awareness — rhyming, segmenting & blending sounds	Cloud Observation Science (Science + Math + Observation)	Clap syllables and segment/substitute phonemes; retell key ideas; create cloud drawings (scientific + imaginative) outdoors
2	Vocabulary in Context — 4-step vocabulary routine	Light & Shadow Silhouette Art (Visual Art + Science + Creative Expression)	Define vocabulary (medium, carve, silhouette, observe, imagine, transform) using 4-Step Routine; create silhouette art using light, shadow, and black paper on blue materials and use it to paint a nature scene
3	Fluency — accuracy, expression, and partner reading	Reader's Theater & Cloud Imagination Art (Fluency + Science + Observation)	Write and illustrate original “the story using retelling cards; practice fluency; conduct an Reader’s Theater performancethe their “the story using retelling cards; practice fluency; conduct an Reader’s Theater; paint white cloud shapes on blue paper

Alignment to School-Day Standards

This program directly reinforces Nebraska ELA standards being taught during the school day. OST staff are often not certified teachers, so this unit is specifically designed with scripted lesson plans so non-credentialed facilitators can implement high-quality, standards-aligned activities.

Grade	Nebraska ELA Standards	Connection to School Day
K	LA.K.RP.1 · LA.K.F.2.b · LA.K.F.4	Retelling stories, syllable clapping, smooth and correct reading
1st	LA.1.RP.1 · LA.1.F.2.a · LA.1.F.4.a	Retelling with details, phoneme segmentation and blending, expressive reading
2nd	LA.2.RP.1 · LA.2.F.2.a · LA.2.F.4.a	Story retelling with lesson identification; phoneme substitution; expressive oral reading

Grant & Reporting Category Alignment

This unit supports the following reporting categories for **21st CCLC and similar OST grant programs**:

- **21st CCLC Program Quality:** Literacy enrichment aligned to Nebraska ELA standards (K–2) across literary text, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and fluency.
- **STEAM Integration:** Art + Math + Engineering (L1), Science + Math + Nature (L2), Visual Art + Math + Creative Expression (L3). Aligns to ELG Standard M.02.
- **School-Day Alignment:** Mirrors the Nebraska Science of Reading framework at each grade level. Reinforces, not replaces, school-day instruction.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Grade-level modifications built into every lesson for K, 1st, and 2nd grade learners in a multi-grade OST setting, with Emerging and Advanced learner supports.
- **Attendance & Engagement:** 3-session unit with structured check-in forms and portfolio artifacts for impact documentation.

Additional Notes

Extra space to provide additional context and notes for school-based leadership.

SCRIPTED LESSON PACKAGE

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

Lesson 1 of 3 — Introducing the Story & Phonemic Awareness

⌚ 60 minutes • Cloud Observation Science — Science + Math + Observation

Standards

Reading Prose & Poetry / Literary Text:

- K: LA.K.RP. — With adult help, I can retell stories with details and show understanding of the main message or lesson.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.1 — I can retell a story I know using important details.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.1 — I can retell stories and explain the important lessons within them.

Science of Reading: Phonemic Awareness Focus:

- K: LA.K.F.2.b — I can recognize and make rhyming words.
- 1st: LA.1.F.2.a — I can break down short words and say each sound by itself. I can put sounds together to speak words.
- 2nd: LA.2.F.2.a — I can break down short words and say each sound by itself. I can put sounds together to speak words.

Objectives

Adult Language (SWBAT):

Students will be able to retell key events in *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* and identify the central message that imagination helps us see the world in new and creative ways. Students will be able to recognize and produce rhyming words from the story (K), segment phonemes using Elkonin Boxes (1st), or substitute phonemes to build new words (2nd).

Student-Friendly Language:

I can explain what the image looked like on each page and explain why imagination matters. I can hear and work with the sounds in words.

At a Glance

BOOK

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

BIG IDEA

Imagination helps us see the world in new and creative ways.

VOCAB WORD

Imaginative: using your mind to see things in new and creative ways

Materials

SUPPLIES

- *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Whiteboard or chart paper + markers
- Feeling words cards/emoji visuals
- Milk (carton or a small amount to pour)
- Tray to pour milk into
- Clipboards (one per student)
- Blank white paper (2 sheets per student)
- Pencils and crayons or colored pencils
- Whiteboard + markers (teacher modeling)

OPTIONAL

- K: Printed rhyming picture card pairs (cloud/loud, milk/silk, sky/fly, bird/heard)
- 1st: Printed Elkonin Box sheets (3–4 boxes per row)
- 2nd: Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper
- Counters, coins, or bingo chips — 3–4 per student (1st grade Elkonin Boxes)
- Small mirrors to watch mouth movements while producing sounds
- Magnifying glasses for ground-level nature observation
- Printed cloud type reference chart (cirrus, cumulus, stratus, nimbostratus)
- Short video or images of different cloud formations
- Sentence strips pre-written with target rhyming pairs: milk/silk, cloud/loud, bird/heard

Pre-Lesson Set-Up

- Set out Helix Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
- Write today's target words on the board: milk (silk), cloud (loud), bird (word), sky (fly), rain (train), with rhyming partners alongside.
- K only: Set out rhyming picture card pairs at each table spot.
- 1st grade only: Draw 3–4 Elkonin boxes on chart paper. Practice pushing a counter per sound for "milk" (/m/-/i/-/l/-/k/) and "cloud" (/k/-/l/-/ow/-/d/).
- Identify a safe outdoor area for cloud observation. If outdoor access is unavailable, gather printed or displayed images of clouds in different formations and shapes.

Welcome & Student Check-In (8–10 min)

Greet students warmly as they arrive and invite them to pick up their Check-In Form.

Give students 2–3 minutes to complete the form. Then invite 3–4 volunteers to share: "Who would like to share? Tell us: 'I am feeling ___ today because ___.' All feelings are welcome here!"

Say It Game: Imaginative

Say the word together: imaginative! Whisper it. Now say it like you just looked up and saw a cloud shaped like a dragon breathing fire! Turn and say "I am feeling imaginative!" to a friend.

Being imaginative means using your mind to see things in new and creative ways. When you are imaginative, you look at something ordinary and picture something extraordinary. In today's story, someone is imaginative and sees new and amazing things in the clouds.

Modifications:

Emerging: Provide printed emoji chart. Allow students to point to their feeling instead of writing or cutting.

Advanced: Ask students to share two feelings and explain what causes each one.

Activate Prior Knowledge (7 min)

Slowly pour a small amount of milk onto a tray to create an irregular puddle. Invite students to observe the shape.

Have you ever looked at a spill and thought it looked like something else? Maybe an animal, a face, or a piece of food? Look at our milk puddle—what do you see?

[Take 4–5 responses. Celebrate imaginative answers.]

There is actually a big, fancy word for what your brain is doing right now. It's called pareidolia [pare-i-DOH-lee-a]. It's a special trick your brain plays where it tries to find familiar patterns in random shapes. The coolest part? Every single person in this room might look at this same puddle of milk and see something completely different! That is the power of your imagination.

Science of Reading Mini Lesson: Phonemic Awareness (10 min)

Step 1 — Introduce (All Grades):

Good readers listen carefully to the sounds inside words. Just like we look at a cloud and find the shape hiding inside it, we're going to look at words and find the sounds hiding inside them!

Step 2 — Kindergarten (Rhyming):

Say two words. Thumbs up if they rhyme, thumbs down if they don't! Milk... silk. [pause] Cloud... loud. [pause] Bird... word. [pause] Sky... fly. [pause] Rain... train. [pause] (Note — all of these words rhyme!)

Now YOUR turn! Can you think of a word that rhymes with "milk"? With "cloud"? With "sky"? Turn and tell a partner—see who can find the silliest rhyme!

K teacher tip: After rhyming pairs, hold up picture cards so students have a visual anchor for each word.

Step 2 — 1st Grade (Elkonin Box Segmentation):

Elkonin Boxes (also called Sound Boxes) are a research-based phonemic awareness tool. Each box represents ONE phoneme (sound), not one letter. Students push one counter per sound as they say it aloud — the physical motion anchors the auditory learning.

Watch me. The word is "cloud." /k/ [push] — /l/ [push] — /ow/ [push] — /d/ [push]. Four sounds, four boxes! Now let's try "rain" together. Say it slowly...

Practice words from the book: milk (/m/-/i/-/l/-/k/ = 4), cloud (/k/-/l/-/ow/-/d/ = 4), rain (/r/-/ā/-/n/ = 3), bird (/b/-/ēr/-/d/ = 3), sky (/s/-/k/-/i/ = 3)

Step 2 — 2nd Grade (Phoneme Substitution):

We're going to change one sound in a word to make a brand new word! Start with "milk." Change the /m/ to /s/... you get SILK! Now try: change the /r/ in "rain" to /p/. [pain!] Change the /sk/ in "sky" to /fl/. [fly!] Change the /b/ in "bird" to /th/. [third!]

Kindergarten

Partners share a rhyming picture card set and take turns saying a rhyming pair aloud.

1st Grade

Students use counters above a drawn Elkonin Box sheet to segment: milk, cloud, rain, bird, sky. Push one counter per sound.

2nd Grade

Students write two "before and after" word pairs on a mini whiteboard (e.g., milk → silk, rain → pain, bird → third).

Teacher Tip: Always say the sounds aloud as you push — the physical motion paired with the vocal sound is what builds the phonemic awareness connection. Avoid spelling the word out; this activity is purely about sound, not letters.

Modifications:

Emerging: K: Provide picture cards for each rhyming pair so students can point and match before saying the words aloud. For 1st grade Elkonin Boxes, pre-draw the boxes and start with 3-sound words (e.g., "sky").

Advanced: Challenge students to create a short silly rhyming sentence using two words from today's list: "The bird heard a word about a nerd!" Sort sound-swap words into cloud-related vs. non-cloud categories.

Read Aloud (15 min)

Hold up the book. The title is *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*, and the author and illustrator is Charles G. Shaw. He wrote this in 1947—over 70 years ago! What do you notice about the cover? [A blue background. A white shape. Simple. Bold. Interesting.]

This book has a special pattern. Every page follows the same structure. As I read, see if you can figure out the pattern and try to predict what the image might look like next before I turn the page!

During reading, pause at these moments:

- "Sometimes it looked like a Rabbit." Look at the shape. Do you think it looks like a rabbit? What would YOU say it looks like?
- The book keeps saying "But it wasn't a ____." Who is this narrator? How does that change the way the story feels?
- We're getting close to the end. What do YOU think the shape really is? Make your prediction! Turn and tell a partner.
- [On the last page:] It was just a cloud in the sky! Were you surprised? Did anyone predict correctly?

After reading — quick phonemic awareness connection:

The title has the word "milk." Let's segment it: /m/ — /i/ — /l/ — /k/. Four sounds! Can anyone think of a word that rhymes with milk?

Modifications:

Emerging: Seat near the book; use finger pointing to track. Offer the sentence frame: "It looked like a ____ because ____." Pause at each shape and give extra thinking time before turning the page.

Advanced: Ask students to identify the book's repetitive structure and explain how it builds suspense. Why does the author keep saying "but it wasn't"? What does that do to the reader?

STEAM Activity: Cloud Observation Science — Science + Math + Observation (20 min)

Part 1 — Introduce Cloud Science

In our book, one cloud looked like all kinds of different things—a rabbit, a bird, a tree, spilt milk! Did you know there are actually different types of clouds? Scientists who study clouds and weather are called meteorologists.

There are three main cloud families:

CUMULUS clouds are the big, puffy ones that look like cotton balls—the best shapes-in-clouds clouds!

STRATUS clouds are flat and gray and spread across the whole sky.

CIRRUS clouds are wispy and high up, like someone smeared white chalk across the sky.

Today you're going to go outside and become cloud scientists!

Optional: Watch PBS Everyday Learning Clouds and Weather Video (2:15)

Part 2 — Cloud Observation & Drawing

Take your clipboard, two sheets of paper, and a pencil. We're going outside to do what the narrator of our story does—look up, observe, and use our imaginations. Here's your scientist's challenge:

Sheet 1 — Science Observation: Draw exactly what you see in the sky. What type of cloud do you see: cumulus, stratus, or cirrus? Label it. What color is it? Where is it in the sky? Is it moving?

Sheet 2 — Imagination Drawing: Now look at the same cloud. What does your imagination see? Draw what the cloud looks like to you, just like in the book. Give it a title: "It looked like a ____."

Guide students outside and give them 8–10 minutes to observe and draw. Circulate and prompt: What type of cloud do you think that is? What clues help you decide? Is your imagination drawing different from your scientific drawing? If outdoors is unavailable: Project or print 3–4 cloud photos. Students complete both drawings based on the photographs.

Part 3 — Compare & Share

Hold up your drawings and compare your science drawing and your imagination drawing. How are they the same? How are they different? Which one was more fun to make? Which required more careful thinking?

[Take 3–4 shares.] This is what scientists AND artists do—they observe the same thing and see it differently depending on what lens they use. A scientist uses data. An artist uses imagination. Today you were both!

Modifications:

Emerging: Provide a pre-drawn cloud outline on Sheet 1 for students to fill in. For Sheet 2, offer the sentence frame "It looked like a ____" at the bottom. Tell students what type of cloud they are seeing and then have them draw.

Advanced: Challenge students to observe three different cloud formations and classify each one by type. Write 2–3 sentences using science vocabulary: "I observed ____ clouds. They were ____ because _____. My imagination saw _____."

Closing & Celebration (5 min)

Cloud scientists and word explorers, today you looked up at the sky and found something real and something imaginary. Just like the book, you discovered that the same shape can be two different things depending on who is looking.

Before we go, let's say our feeling word one more time: imaginative! Because today you listened to a book that is still making people look up at the sky, and you proved that your imagination is just as powerful as any cloud.

Turn and tell a partner: what's one thing your imagination saw today, either in the milk puddle, in the clouds, or in the book? [Give 1 minute.] Hold onto that, next time, we'll go even deeper into our vocabulary and make our own silhouette art. I can't wait to see what you create!

SCRIPTED LESSON PACKAGE

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

Lesson 2 of 3 — Shared Reading & Vocabulary Exploration

⌚ 60 minutes • Light & Shadow Silhouette Art — Visual Art + Science + Creative Expression

Standards

Reading Prose & Poetry / Literary Text:

- K: LA.K.RP.2 — With adult help, I can tell the main character, setting, and important events in a story.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.2 — I can tell the characters, setting, and what happens in stories.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.4 — I can describe how a story is written, including how the problem is solved.

Science of Reading: Vocabulary Focus:

- K: LA.K.RP.6 — With adult help, I can ask and answer questions about important details in stories. I can use words and pictures to understand new words.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.6 — I can ask and answer questions about important details in stories. I can figure out the meaning of unknown words using clues from the story.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.6 — I can ask and answer different kinds of questions about stories I have read. I can use context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words.

Objectives

Adult Language (SWBAT):

Students will be able to identify and explain key vocabulary words (silhouette, observe, imagine, transform) using the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine, including student-friendly definitions, story connections, real-life connections, and grade-differentiated practice. Students will be able to apply vocabulary words in context during shared reading and explore how light, shadow, and shape interact through a hands-on silhouette art activity.

Student-Friendly Language:

I can learn what important words in our story mean and use them in my own talking and writing. I can create silhouette art using light and shadow and explain how the silhouette is formed.

At a Glance

BOOK

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

BIG IDEA

Imagination and careful observation work together to transform how we see the world.

VOCAB WORDS

Silhouette, Observe, Imagine, Transform

Materials

SUPPLIES

- It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw
- Chart paper/whiteboard for class vocabulary anchor chart
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards
- K: Printed picture response cards for acting out vocabulary words
- 1st: Sentence frame strips: "A silhouette is ____." / "I imagined ____ when I saw ____." (one per student)
- 2nd: Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper
- Glue sticks for mounting finished silhouettes

OPTIONAL

- Option A — Light & Shadow: flashlight or lamp + white paper or sheet taped to wall
- Option B — Paper & Scissors: black construction paper, scissors, white or blue paper for background
- Option C — Window silhouettes: tape black paper shapes to a window, let light through
- Option D — Light table (if available): laminated silhouette cutouts
- Printed images of famous silhouette art as visual reference
- Small counters or bingo chips for tactile vocabulary practice
- Cloud type reference chart from Lesson 1 displayed for ongoing reference

Pre-Lesson Set-Up

- Print or write vocabulary word cards large enough for whole-group display: Silhouette, Transform, Observe, Imagine.
- Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
- 1st grade: Pre-write sentence frame strips and place at each student's spot.
- 2nd grade: Set out mini whiteboards and dry-erase markers at each table.
- Choose and set up your silhouette method (Options A–D) before students arrive. Test your light source and paper placement if using Option A.
- Bookmark key vocabulary pages in the book for shared reading stops.
- Optional: display 1–2 printed silhouette art examples on the board as a visual anchor.

Welcome & Student Check-In (5 min)

Greet students warmly as they arrive.

Welcome back, friends! Before we dive in, let's check in. Show me with your emoji, or tell me with words, how you're feeling today. [Take 2–3 brief responses.]

Last time, we went outside and looked at real clouds, then let our imaginations turn those clouds into something else. Today we're going to use shadows to make art—but first, let's learn the powerful words that will help us talk about what we see and what we imagine.

Modifications:

Emerging: Offer sentence frame: "Something I imagined yesterday when I looked at the cloud was ____."

Advanced: Ask: "How is imagining something different from simply observing it? Can you do both at the same time?"

Activate Prior Knowledge (5 min)

Yesterday, we read *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* together. Who can remember what some of the things the cloud looked like? Turn and tell a partner before sharing out! [Take 2–3 shares.]

Today, we're going to read the story again as readers, scientists, and artists! We're going to focus on four vocabulary words that describe exactly what happens in this book—what the narrator does when they look at the cloud, and how the cloud changes from page to page.

Science of Reading: Vocabulary Word Detective (10 min)

The 4-Step Vocabulary Routine (Say It → Define It → Connect It → Use It) gives students a consistent, repeatable structure for learning new words deeply. Each word takes approximately 2 minutes.

Today we're going to learn 4 powerful words from *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* using our Word Detective Routine. Every time I show you a new word, we'll do 4 things together: SAY IT — DEFINE IT — CONNECT IT — USE IT. Ready? Let's go!

Word 1: SILHOUETTE

SAY IT: Silhouette. Say it with me, sil-hou-ette. Whisper it. Now say it like you just spotted your shadow on the wall and it surprised you!

DEFINE IT: A silhouette is the dark shape or outline of something seen against a lighter background—like your shadow, or a black shape on a white page.

CONNECT IT: Every shape in *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* is a silhouette—white on blue. There are no details inside the shapes, just the outline. That's what makes it feel like a cloud! Have you ever noticed your shadow? Tried to make funny shapes with it?

Grade-level USE IT:

- K: Stand up and make a shape with your body. Freeze! Tell a partner: "My silhouette looks like ____."
- 1st: Complete your sentence frame: "A silhouette is ____ because ____."
- 2nd: On your whiteboard, write one sentence: "I could see the silhouette of ____ when ____."

Word 2: OBSERVE

SAY IT: Observe. Together, observe. Say it like you're a scientist with a magnifying glass, studying something very carefully!

DEFINE IT: Observe means to watch or study something very carefully, using your senses to notice details others might miss.

CONNECT IT: The narrator in our story observes the cloud carefully, noticing its shape, its edges, what it looks like. Yesterday, outside, you were observers too! What's something you observed about the sky that surprised you?

Grade-level USE IT:

- K: Observe one thing in the room right now. Tell a partner: "I observe ____."
- 1st: Complete: "I observed ____ when I looked at the cloud because ____."
- 2nd: Write: "A scientist would observe a cloud by ____."

Word 3: IMAGINE

SAY IT: Imagine. Together, imagine. Close your eyes and say it slowly...

DEFINE IT: Imagine means to form a picture in your mind of something that isn't actually in front of you—to create with your thinking.

CONNECT IT: This is the narrator's superpower in our book! They can look at a real cloud and imagine it into a rabbit, a bird, or a tree. Your imagination is different from everyone else's. Close your eyes for 5 seconds and imagine you are floating on a cloud. [Pause.] What did you picture?

USE IT (all grades): Share with a partner, "I imagined ____." Then ask: "Did you and your partner imagine the same thing?"

Word 4: TRANSFORM

SAY IT: Transform. Together, transform. Say it like something is completely changing right now!

DEFINE IT: Transform means to completely change from one thing into something very different.

CONNECT IT: In our book, the same white shape transforms on every page—from a rabbit to a bird to a squirrel to a birthday cake. But here's the question: did the cloud transform, or did the imagination make it change? [Great discussion point!]

USE IT (all grades): Show me transform with your body—start as a tiny seed, slowly grow, and transform into a tall tree! Now: use "transform" and "imagine" in the same sentence with a partner.

Modifications:

Emerging: Focus on SAY IT and DEFINE IT only for each word. Use picture response cards; students hold up a card that matches each word's meaning instead of writing.

Advanced: After the routine, challenge students to use all 4 words in one connected sentence or mini story: "I observed a cloud and used my imagination to transform its silhouette into a rabbit."

Shared Reading with Vocabulary Stops (15 min)

Now that we know our 4 powerful words, let's put them to work! As I read, every time you see or hear one of our words—silhouette, observe, imagine, or transform—give me a quiet thumbs up.

During reading, pause at these moments:

- Look at this page. The white shape is the silhouette of the cloud. Notice there are no details inside—no color, no features, just the outline. How does that make it easier or harder to imagine what the shape could be?
- The same shape appears on page after page, but it transforms into something new every time. Who is doing the transforming—the cloud or the narrator? [The narrator's imagination transforms it!]
- The book calls this shape "spilt milk." Have you ever spilled something and noticed it made an interesting shape? That is something that happens in the real world—and it inspired this entire book!
- [At the very end:] "But it wasn't Spilt Milk. It was just a cloud in the sky." Why do you think the author reveals this at the end instead of the beginning? What does that choice do to the reader?

After Reading Discussion:

Turn and tell your partner: Which vocabulary word best describes what the narrator does throughout this story? [observe! imagine!] And which word describes what the cloud does on every page? [transform!]

Modifications:

Emerging: Provide a simple picture sequencing strip showing 4–5 of the shapes from the book. Students point to each in order as you read.

Advanced: Ask students to analyze the author's craft: Why does Charles G. Shaw use white on blue rather than color illustrations? What effect does that create? How would the book feel different if the clouds were colored and detailed?

STEAM Activity: Light & Shadow Silhouette Art — Visual Art + Science + Creative Expression (22 min)

Part 1 — The Science of Silhouettes

In our book, every shape is a silhouette—a white shape against a blue background, with no details inside. Silhouettes in the real world are formed by LIGHT. When an object blocks light, it creates a dark shadow—a silhouette—on whatever is behind it.

Demonstrate your chosen method:

Option A (Light & Shadow): Hold your hand between the flashlight and the paper. What do you see? That's your hand's silhouette! There are no details inside the shadow, just the outline—exactly what Charles G. Shaw did in his book.

Option B (Paper & Scissors): We'll cut a shape from black paper and glue it onto white or blue paper, just like the white shapes in our book, but reversed.

Option C (Window): Tape your cut paper shape to the window and let light through—the shape becomes a silhouette.

Option D (Light Table): Place laminated silhouette cutouts on the light table and explore how light changes the way the shapes look.

Part 2 — Create Your Silhouette

You can make a silhouette of anything—an animal, a tree, a person, a cloud shape, something from our book, or something from your imagination. Remember: in a silhouette, the shape is everything. There are no details inside, just the beautiful outline.

As students create, circulate and ask: How is your silhouette being formed? What shape did you choose, and does it remind you of anything else? Which vocabulary word describes your silhouette?

Part 3 — Label & Display

At the bottom of your silhouette, write or dictate: "It looked like a _____. But it was really _____."—just like the pattern in our book! Try to use a vocabulary word in your label.

Display silhouettes together as a class gallery—arrange them on a blue background if possible to mirror the look of the book.

Modifications:

Emerging: Pre-cut silhouette shapes from black paper (simple animals, trees, clouds, hands). Let students choose one, glue it onto blue paper, and add their label with educator support.

Advanced: Challenge students to create a silhouette scene—multiple shapes arranged to tell a mini story. Write 2–3 sentences: "It looked like _____ and _____. But it was really _____. I transformed the shape by _____."

Closing & Reflection (5 min)

Hold up your silhouette and look at what you made! You used science—the way light and shadow interact—to create a work of art. Charles G. Shaw did the same thing with a cloud. You are artists AND scientists.

Quick vocabulary review:

I'll say a definition, you say the word! "A dark shape or outline seen against a lighter background." [silhouette!] "To watch or study something very carefully." [observe!] "To completely change from one thing into something very different." [transform!]

Look at your silhouette one more time. Share it with the person next to you and say: "My silhouette looked like a _____." In our next lesson, we are going to bring this story to life with our voices in a Reader's Theater and paint our own clouds. Start thinking about what YOUR cloud looks like!

SCRIPTED LESSON PACKAGE

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

Lesson 3 of 3 — Reader's Theater & Cloud Imagination Art

⌚ 60 minutes • Cloud Imagination Art — Art + Science + Creative Expression

Standards

Reading Prose & Poetry / Literary Text:

- K: LA.K.RP.2 — With adult help, I can tell the main character, setting, and important events in a story.
- 1st: LA.1.RP.2 — I can tell the characters, setting, and what happens in stories.
- 2nd: LA.2.RP.4 — I can describe how a story is written, including how the problem is solved.

Science of Reading: Fluency Focus:

- K: LA.K.F.4 — I can read smoothly and correctly with purpose and understanding, using expression.
- 1st: LA.1.F.3 — I can read grade-level text accurately and fluently. I can read with expression to help listeners understand the meaning.
- 2nd: LA.2.F.3 — I can read grade-level text accurately, fluently, and with expression that shows I understand the meaning.

Objectives

Adult Language (SWBAT):

Students will be able to read a Reader's Theater script adapted from *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expressive phrasing that conveys the mystery and wonder of the story. Students will be able to create their own cloud imagination artwork, painting a white shape on blue paper and labeling it using the book's sentence pattern, connecting creative expression to the story's central theme.

Student-Friendly Language:

I can read my part in our Cloud Theater with expression, using my voice to sound mysterious and imaginative. I can paint my own cloud shape and write what it looks like using the pattern from our story!

At a Glance

BOOK

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

BIG IDEA

What you see depends on who is looking—imagination and observation are both forms of power.

VOCAB FOCUS

Review: silhouette, observe, imagine, transform, expressive

Materials

SUPPLIES

- *It Looked Like Spilt Milk* by Charles G. Shaw
- Printed Reader's Theater scripts — one per student (see script at the end of this lesson)
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards
- Vocabulary anchor chart from Lesson 2 (displayed for reference)
- Blue construction paper or cardstock — one sheet per student
- White paint (tempera or washable) — small cups, one per student
- Paintbrushes OR sponges OR students may use fingers/hands
- Pencils for labeling finished artwork

OPTIONAL

- Simple props — a white scarf or tissue paper for the Cloud role
- White oil pastels or white crayons for resist effects
- Cotton balls, dryer sheets, or shaving cream for textured cloud effects
- Display students' silhouettes from Lesson 2 as a gallery backdrop for the Reader's Theater performance
- Cloud type reference chart from Lesson 1 for ongoing science connection

Pre-Lesson Set-Up

- Print the Reader's Theater script (found at the end of this lesson) — one copy per student. Fold in half for easy handling.
- Assign or plan roles in advance: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, the Cloud, and All (whole group lines). For smaller groups, combine Narrators or rotate so every student has an individual role.
- Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
- Prepare paint stations: small cups of white tempera or washable paint and one sheet of blue paper at each spot.
- Display students' silhouettes from Lesson 2 as a gallery backdrop if possible — creates continuity across the three lessons.
- Display the vocabulary anchor chart from Lesson 2 for ongoing reference during fluency and art.

Welcome & Student Check-In (8 min)

Greet students warmly as they arrive.

Good [morning/afternoon], friends! Today is our final day with *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*, and we are going out with a performance and a painting! Before we dive in, let's check in.

Have students complete their Check-In Form. After 2–3 minutes, invite sharing: "Who would like to share how they're feeling? Tell us: 'I am feeling ___ today because ___.'"

Say It Game: Expressive

Our feeling word today is expressive. Say it together, expressive! What does expressive mean? [When you use your face, voice, or body to show clearly what you feel or think—when your emotions come through in how you act or create.]

Say expressive in an expressive way! [Try angry! Sad! Excited! Sleepy!]

Today you are going to be expressive in two ways: with your voice during our Reader's Theater, and with paint during our art activity. When you perform, your voice is your paintbrush. Let's make it expressive!

Modifications:

Emerging: Emoji chart for pointing. Invite students to show their expressive face.

Advanced: Ask: "What is the difference between being expressive and being loud? Can you be expressive quietly?"

Activate Prior Knowledge: Story Retelling (8 min)

We've spent three days with *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*. Before we perform today, I want to see what you remember. With your partner, take turns retelling the shapes from the story in order—see how many you can name! Go!

[Give partners 2–3 minutes.] What shapes did the cloud look like? [Rabbit, bird, tree, angel, squirrel, flower, birthday cake, sheep, mitten...] You know this book so well!

Here's the big thinking question: What is the one idea that Charles G. Shaw wants every reader to take away from this book? Tell your partner in one sentence. [Call on 3–4 students to share.]

Science of Reading: Reader's Theater Fluency (12 min)

Skill Focus: Reading Fluency — Accuracy, Rate, and Prosody (Expression)

Reader's Theater is a research-supported fluency strategy in which students read from a script aloud, using their voices rather than costumes or memorization to convey character and meaning. It builds reading rate, accuracy, expression, and prosody. It Looked Like Spilt Milk is ideal for Reader's Theater because its repetitive sentence pattern gives students a predictable scaffold and repeated practice with the same structure across many turns.

Step 1 — Introduce Reader's Theater:

Today we're going to do something called Reader's Theater! It's like a play—but we don't need costumes or a stage. All we need are our voices and our scripts. You read your part from the paper and bring your character to life through expression. No memorizing, just read and perform!

Step 2 — Assign Roles & Cold Read:

Assign roles: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, the Cloud, and All (everyone reads the repeating line together). For smaller groups, combine Narrators, or rotate roles after the first run so every student performs.

First, let's do a cold read—everyone read your part quietly to yourself for 60 seconds. Get to know your lines. Notice any vocabulary words you recognize from our lessons!

Step 3 — Perform!

Ready? Let's bring the cloud to life! Remember: Narrators tell the story with a clear, steady voice full of mystery. The Cloud speaks with wonder—it knows it is something special! When we all read together, let's make sure everyone can hear us.

Perform the script through once. If time allows, switch roles and go again. A fluent reader can bring any role to life with expression!

Discussion Questions After Performance:

- Which role was your favorite to read? Why?
- Which vocabulary word from our anchor chart fits this script best? [imagine! silhouette! observe!]
- How did you use your voice to make the mystery feel real?
- If you added one more line to this script—one more thing the cloud looked like—what would you write?

Kindergarten

May participate in the "All" group or take the Cloud role. Focus on expression over accuracy—all attempts are celebrated.

1st Grade

Take on a named role (Narrator 1 or 2, or the Cloud). Focus on reading with a clear, expressive voice matched to the mystery of the story.

2nd Grade

Take on individual named roles. After the first performance, add one original line to the script in the correct sentence pattern and read it aloud.

Modifications:

Emerging: Pre-highlight the student's specific lines on the script. Pair with a buddy who can whisper-prompt if needed. K students may participate as part of the "All" group or take the Cloud role with support.

Advanced: Challenge students to add one original line to the script during the second read—a new shape the cloud could look like, written in the same sentence pattern as the rest of the book. Share their line aloud.

STEAM Activity: Cloud Imagination Art — Art + Science + Creative Expression (20 min)

Part 1 — Introduce the Activity

Charles G. Shaw created this entire book using one technique: white paint on blue paper. Simple. Powerful. And it made millions of people look up at the sky differently.

Today, you are going to be Charles G. Shaw. You're going to paint your own white cloud shape on blue paper, and then give it a name. What does your cloud look like? It could look like anything—an animal, a food, a place, a feeling, a fantasy creature, or something no one has ever seen before.

Part 2 — Paint & Imagine

Take your blue paper and your white paint. You can use a brush, a sponge, or your fingers—experiment! Here's the only rule: your shape should be interesting, not a perfect square or circle, but something with soft edges and unexpected bumps, like a real cloud.

As students paint, circulate and ask: What are you seeing in your shape as it develops? Does it look like something different from each angle? What vocabulary word describes the shape you're making?

When paint is dry or mostly dry, students may begin labeling while others finish painting: "At the bottom of your paper, write the sentence from our book: 'It looked like a _____. But it wasn't a _____. It was just a cloud in the sky.' Fill in YOUR imagination's answer."

Part 3 — Gallery Display

Let's arrange our cloud paintings on the wall, side by side, just like pages in a book. Walk along the gallery and look at each other's clouds. When you find one that looks like something surprising to you—something different from what the artist intended—quietly point to it and share what you see. One cloud. Two imaginations. Two completely different pictures!

Modifications:

Emerging: Pre-cut or pre-paint a simple cloud blob shape for students who find open-ended painting challenging. Let them focus on the labeling and sharing steps—deciding what THEIR cloud looks like is the imagination work.

Advanced: Challenge students to create two cloud paintings—one that looks like something real (an animal, a person) and one that is completely abstract. Write two full sentences for each: "It looked like _____ because _____. But it was just a cloud formed by _____."

Closing & Celebration (5 min)

Look at everything you have made and done over these three lessons! You went outside and studied real clouds like scientists. You made silhouette art using light and shadow. You performed a Reader's Theater with your voices. And today you painted your own clouds and gave them names from your imagination.

Charles G. Shaw looked up at a cloud and saw spilt milk. What did YOU see? [Invite 3–4 students to share their cloud painting titles.] Different imaginations. Same cloud. That is the point of this entire book.

Look at your cloud painting one more time. That white shape—that's not just paint on paper. That is your imagination, visible. That is you deciding what the world looks like. And no one else sees exactly what you see.

Turn and share your cloud painting title with the person next to you: "My cloud looked like a ____." Then listen to theirs. Same lesson, same book—and still, no two clouds are the same.

Reader's Theater Script — Cloud Theater

Roles: Narrator 1 — Narrator 2 — The Cloud — All

Educator Note: This script follows the repeating pattern of the original book, adapted for three-voice fluency practice. Narrators read with a steady, wondering voice. The Cloud reads with a sense of mystery and delight. All read the refrain together. Select 5–8 shapes based on your available time.

— OPENING —

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like Spilt Milk.

Narrator 2: But it wasn't Spilt Milk.

The Cloud: I was something else entirely.

All: What did it look like?

— RABBIT —

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like a Rabbit.

Narrator 2: With two long, soft ears,

Narrator 1: and a round, fluffy tail.

All: But it wasn't a Rabbit.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

— BIRD —

Narrator 2: Sometimes it looked like a Bird.

Narrator 1: Wings spread wide,

Narrator 2: soaring without a sound.

All: But it wasn't a Bird.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

— TREE —

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like a Tree.

Narrator 2: Tall and still,

Narrator 1: with branches reaching up.

All: But it wasn't a Tree.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

— SQUIRREL —

Narrator 2: Sometimes it looked like a Squirrel.

Narrator 1: With a big, bushy tail

Narrator 2: curled up behind it.

All: But it wasn't a Squirrel.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

— BIRTHDAY CAKE —

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like a Birthday Cake.

Narrator 2: With tiny candles glowing,

Narrator 1: and a wish waiting to be made.

All: But it wasn't a Birthday Cake.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

— YOUR TURN —

(Optional: students fill in their own shape)

Narrator 1 or 2: Sometimes it looked like a ____.

All: But it wasn't a ____.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

— CLOSING —

Narrator 1: It wasn't Spilt Milk.

Narrator 2: It wasn't a Rabbit.

Narrator 1: It wasn't a Bird, or a Tree, or a Squirrel.

Narrator 2: It wasn't a Birthday Cake.

All: It was just a cloud in the sky.

The Cloud: But what a cloud it was.

Educator Note: After the performance, invite students to add their own page using the pattern: "Sometimes it looked like a _____. But it wasn't a _____. It was just a cloud in the sky." Students who are ready to write may compose their own line independently and share it aloud.

GRAB AND GO LESSON PACKAGE

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

Lesson 1 of 3 — Introducing the Story & Phonemic Awareness

⌚ 60 minutes • 🌱 Cloud Observation Science (Science + Math + Observation)

BOOK

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

BIG IDEA

Imagination helps us see the world in new and creative ways.

VOCAB WORD

Imaginative: using your mind to see things in new and creative ways

Materials

SUPPLIES

- It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw
- Whiteboard or chart paper + markers
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Feeling word cards / emoji visuals
- Milk (carton or small amount to pour)
- Tray to pour milk into
- Clipboards — one per student
- Blank white paper — 2 sheets per student
- Pencils and crayons or colored pencils
- **TO PRINT:** Helix Daily Check-In Form

OPTIONAL / GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC

- **K:** Printed rhyming picture card pairs (cloud/loud, milk/silk, sky/fly, bird/heard)
- **1st:** Printed Elkonin Box sheets (3–4 boxes per row); counters or bingo chips — 3–4 per student
- **2nd:** Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper
- Small mirrors to watch mouth movements while producing sounds
- Optional: printed cloud type reference chart (cirrus, cumulus, stratus)

Pre-Lesson Set-Up

1. Set out Helix Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
2. Write today's target words on the board with rhyming partners: milk (silk), cloud (loud), bird (word), sky (fly), rain (train).
3. **K only:** Set out rhyming picture card pairs at each table spot.
4. **1st grade only:** Draw 3–4 Elkonin boxes on chart paper. Practice pushing a counter per sound for 'milk' (/m/-/i/-/l/-/k/) and 'cloud' (/k/-/l/-/ow/-/d/).
5. Identify a safe outdoor area for cloud observation (grassy area or open courtyard).

Welcome & Student Check-In (8–10 min)

1. Greet students warmly and invite them to pick up a Check-In Form.
2. Give students 2–3 minutes to complete the "How am I feeling?" section. Invite 3–4 volunteers to share.
3. Play the Say It Game with the word Imaginative.
 - Say it together.
 - **Definition:** "Being imaginative means using your mind to see things in new and creative ways, looking at something ordinary and picturing something extraordinary."

Modifications:

Emerging: Provide a printed emoji chart. Allow students to point to their feelings instead of writing.

Advanced: Ask students to share two feelings and explain what causes each one.

Activate Prior Knowledge (7 min)

1. Complete the Demonstration: Pour a small, irregular puddle of milk onto a tray and instruct students to watch the shape it forms. Ask students to identify what the shape looks like and collect 4–5 imaginative responses.
2. Define Pareidolia: Explain the term pareidolia (pare-i-DOH-lee-a), the brain's tendency to find familiar patterns in random shapes.
3. Introduce It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw, and explain that everyone will be using pareidolia as you read.

Science of Reading Mini Lesson: Phonemic Awareness (10 min)

Before Starting: Determine your grade-level structure. Options:

- Separate students into grade levels with an adult or student leader
 - Complete each activity per grade level as a whole group
 - Complete one main activity with the whole group
1. "Good readers listen carefully to the sounds inside words. Just like we look at a cloud and find the shape hiding inside it, we're going to look at words and find the sounds hiding inside them!"
 2. Introduce and model the activity for your grade level (see the leveled table below).
 3. Complete the grade-level or whole-group activity.

Modifications:

Emerging: K: Provide picture cards for each rhyming pair so students can point and match before saying the words aloud. 1st: Pre-draw the Elkonin boxes and start with 3-sound words (e.g., 'sky').

Advanced: Create a short silly rhyming sentence using two words from today's list: 'The bird heard a word about a nerd!' Sort sound-swap words into cloud-related vs. non-cloud categories.

Kindergarten	Rhyming • "I'll say two words. Thumbs up if they rhyme, thumbs down if they don't!" • Pairs: milk/silk · cloud/loud · bird/word · sky/fly · rain/train (all rhyme!) • "Now YOUR turn — can you think of a word that rhymes with 'milk'? With 'cloud'? Turn and tell a partner!" • Hold up picture cards so students have a visual anchor.
1st Grade	Elkonin Box Push • Model pushing one counter per sound. • 'The word is cloud. /k/ [push] — /l/ [push] — /ow/ [push] — /d/ [push]. 4 sounds, 4 boxes!' • Practice: milk (/m/-/i/-/l/-/k/ = 4), cloud (/k/-/l/-/ow/-/d/ = 4), rain (/r/-/ā/-/n/ = 3), bird (/b/-/er/-/d/ = 3), sky (/s/-/k/-/ī/ = 3). Always say sounds aloud as you push.
2nd Grade	Phoneme Substitution • Change one sound in a story word to make a new word! • Change /m/ in MILK to /s/ → SILK! • Change /r/ in RAIN to /p/ → pain! • Change /sk/ in SKY to /fl/ → fly! • Change /b/ in BIRD to /th/ → third! • Students write two 'before → after' word pairs and share with the class.

Read Aloud (15 min)

1. Preview the cover. Identify author, illustrator, and ask what the students notice about the cover picture.
2. "This book has a special pattern. Every page follows the same structure. As I read, see if you can figure out the pattern and predict what the image might look like next before I turn the page!"
3. Read the book aloud. Pause at these moments:
 - "Sometimes it looked like a Rabbit." Look at the shape. Do you think it looks like a rabbit? What part of the rabbit do you see?
 - "The book keeps saying, 'But it wasn't a ____.' Who is the narrator? How does that change the way the story feels?"
 - "We're getting close to the end. We've seen a rabbit, a bird, a tree, a pig, a flower... What do YOU think the shape really is? Make your prediction!"
 - "[On the last page:] It was just a cloud in the sky! Were you surprised? Did anyone predict correctly?"
4. After reading — quick phonemic awareness connection: "The title has the word 'milk.' Let's segment it: /m/ — /i/ — /l/ — /k/. Four sounds! Can anyone think of a word that rhymes with milk?"

Modifications:

Emerging: Seat near the book; use finger pointing to track. Offer the sentence frame: 'It looked like a ____ because ____.' Pause at each shape and give extra thinking time.

Advanced: Ask students to identify the book's repetitive structure and explain how it builds suspense. Why does the author keep saying 'but it wasn't'?

STEAM Activity: Cloud Observation Science — Science + Math + Observation (20 min)

Part 1: Introduce Cloud Science

1. "In our book, one cloud looked like all kinds of different things. Did you know there are actually different types of clouds? Each of the types can look different."
2. Introduce the three main clouds:
 - **CUMULUS:** Big, puffy clouds that look like cotton balls — the best shape-spotting clouds!
 - **STRATUS:** Flat and gray, spread across the whole sky.
 - **CIRRUS:** Wispy and high up, like someone smeared white chalk across the sky.
3. Optional: Watch a short cloud and weather video (2–3 min) as a visual anchor.

Part 2: Cloud Observation & Drawing (10 min)

1. Introduce the activity: "Take your clipboard, two sheets of paper, and a pencil. We're going outside to look up, observe, and use our imaginations."
2. Part 1 — Science Observation: Draw exactly what you see in the sky. What type of cloud do you see? Label it. What color is it? Is it moving?
3. Part 2 — Imagination Drawing: Look at the same cloud. What does your imagination see? Draw what it looks like to you, just like the book. Give it a title: 'It looked like a ____.'
4. As students observe, circulate and ask:
 - What type of cloud do you think that is? What clues help you decide?
 - Is your imagination drawing different from your science drawing?
 - What details did you add that weren't really there?

If outdoors is unavailable: Project or print 3–4 cloud photos. Students complete both drawings based on the photographs.

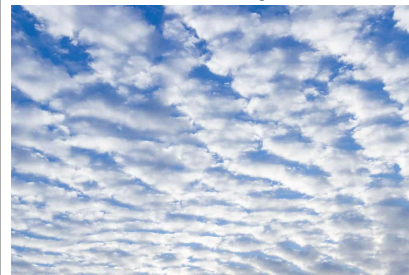
Part 3: Compare & Share (5 min)

1. Partner the students, or put them in small groups, and have them share their cloud drawings.

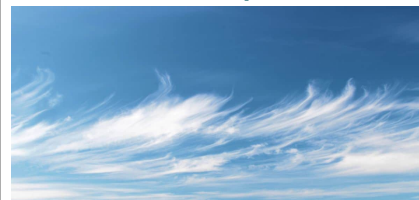
Cumulus Cloud Example



Stratus Cloud Example



Cirrus Cloud Example



Modifications:

Emerging: Provide a pre-drawn cloud outline on Sheet 1 for students to fill in. For Sheet 2, offer the sentence frame 'It looked like a ____' at the bottom. Tell students what type of cloud they are seeing, then have them draw.

Advanced: Observe three different cloud formations and classify each by type. Write 2–3 sentences: 'I observed ____ clouds. They were ____ because _____. My imagination saw ____.'

Closing & Celebration (5 min)

1. Celebrate the students and have them share one thing they learned as cloud scientists.
2. Ask the students to share one way that they were imaginative today.

GRAB AND GO LESSON PACKAGE

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

Lesson 2 of 3 — Shared Reading & Vocabulary Exploration

⌚ 60 minutes • 🌱 Light & Shadow Silhouette Art (Visual Art + Science + Creative Expression)

BOOK

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

BIG IDEA

When we observe and imagine, we see the same thing in completely different ways.

VOCAB WORD

Silhouette, Observe, Imagine, Transform

Materials

SUPPLIES

- It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw
- Chart paper or whiteboard for vocabulary anchor chart
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Emoji Faces / Feeling word cards
- Glue sticks (for mounting finished silhouettes)
- **TO PRINT:** Helix Daily Check-In Form

OPTIONAL / GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC

- Choose one silhouette method:
- **Option A:** Flashlight or lamp + white paper or sheet taped to wall
- **Option B:** Black construction paper, scissors, white or blue paper background
- **Option C:** Tape black paper shapes to a window, let light through
- **Option D:** Light table (if available) with laminated silhouette cutouts
- **K:** Printed picture response cards for acting out vocabulary words
- **1st:** Sentence frame strips: 'A silhouette is ____.' / 'I imagined ____ when I saw ____.'
- **2nd:** Mini whiteboards + dry-erase markers OR lined paper
- Optional: printed images of famous silhouette art as visual reference

Pre-Lesson Set-Up

1. Print or write vocabulary word cards large enough for whole-group display: Silhouette, Observe, Imagine, Transform.
2. Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
3. **1st grade:** Pre-write sentence frame strips and place at each student's spot.
4. **2nd grade:** Set out mini whiteboards and dry-erase markers at each table.
5. Choose and set up your silhouette method (Options A–D) before students arrive.
6. **Option A only:** Test your light source and paper placement.
7. Bookmark key vocabulary pages in the book for shared reading stops.
8. Optional: Display 1–2 printed silhouette art examples on the board as a visual anchor.

Welcome & Student Check-In (5 min)

1. Greet students warmly. Ask students to show or share how they're feeling using emojis or words. Take 2–3 brief responses.
2. "Last time, we went outside and looked at real clouds — then let our imaginations turn those clouds into something else. Today we're going to use shadows to make art. But first, let's learn the powerful words that will help us talk about what we see and what we imagine."

Modifications:

Emerging: Sentence frame: 'Something I imagined yesterday when I looked at the cloud was ____.'

Advanced: How is imagining something different from simply observing it? Can you do both at the same time?

Activate Prior Knowledge (5 min)

1. Recall with the students what some of the clouds looked like in *It Looked Like Spilt Milk*. Ask students to turn and tell a partner and then have 2–3 whole class shares.
2. Share that today the students will be artists, scientists, and word detectives.

Science of Reading: Vocabulary Word Detective (10 min)

Use the 4-Step Vocabulary Routine for each word: SAY IT → DEFINE IT → CONNECT IT → USE IT

SILHOUETTE

- **Say It:** "sil-hou-ette" — say it together, whisper it, now say it like you just spotted your shadow on the wall and it surprised you!
- **Define It:** The dark shape or outline of something seen against a lighter background — like your shadow, or a black shape on a white page.
- **Connect It:** Every shape in the book is a silhouette — white on blue. No details inside, just the outline. That's what makes it feel like a cloud! Have you ever tried to make funny shapes with your shadow?
- **Use It:** K: Make a shape with your body and freeze! Tell a partner: 'My silhouette looks like ____.' | 1st: 'A silhouette is ____ because ____.' | 2nd: 'I could see the silhouette of ____ when ____.'

OBSERVE

- **Say It:** "observe" — say it like you're a scientist with a magnifying glass, studying something very carefully!
- **Define It:** To watch or study something very carefully, using your senses to notice details others might miss.
- **Connect It:** The narrator in our story observes the cloud carefully — noticing its shape and edges. Yesterday, YOU were observers too! What's something you observed about the sky that surprised you?
- **Use It:** K: Observe one thing in the room right now. Tell a partner: 'I observe ____.' | 1st: 'I observed ____ when I looked at the cloud because ____.' | 2nd: 'A scientist would observe a cloud by ____.'

IMAGINE

- **Say It:** "imagine" — say it together. Close your eyes and say it slowly...
- **Define It:** To form a picture in your mind of something that isn't actually in front of you — to create with your thinking.
- **Connect It:** This is the narrator's superpower! They look at a real cloud and imagine it into a rabbit, a bird, or a tree. Close your eyes for 5 seconds and imagine you are floating on a cloud. What did you picture?
- **Use It:** All grades: Share with a partner — 'I imagined ____.' Then ask: 'Did you and your partner imagine the same thing?'

TRANSFORM

- **Say It:** "transform" — say it like something is completely changing right now!
- **Define It:** To completely change from one thing into something very different.
- **Connect It:** The same white shape transforms on every page — from a rabbit to a bird to a squirrel. But did the cloud transform, or did the imagination make it change? [Great discussion point!]
- **Use It:** All grades: Show transform with your body — start as a tiny seed, slowly grow, and transform into a tall tree! Now use 'transform' and 'imagine' in the same sentence with a partner.

Modifications:

Emerging: Focus on SAY IT and DEFINE IT only. Use picture response cards.

Advanced: Use all 4 words in one connected sentence or mini story: 'I observed a cloud and used my imagination to transform its silhouette into a rabbit.'

Shared Reading with Vocabulary Stops (15 min)

1. Complete the read aloud. As you read, ask the students to give you a thumbs up when you see or hear the vocabulary word.
2. Pause at these moments:
 - "Look at this page. The white shape is the silhouette of the cloud. There are NO details inside — just the outline. How does that make it easier or harder to imagine what the shape could be?"
 - "The same shape appears on every page, but it transforms into something new each time. Who is doing the transforming — the cloud or the narrator?"
 - "The book calls this shape 'spilt milk.' Have you ever spilled something and noticed it made an interesting shape?"
 - "[At the very end:] Why do you think the author reveals what the shape really is at the END instead of the beginning?"
3. After reading discussion: "Which vocabulary word best describes what the narrator does throughout the story? [observe! imagine!] And which word describes what the cloud does on every page? [transform!]"

Modifications:

Emerging: Provide a simple picture sequencing strip showing 4–5 of the shapes from the book. Students point to each in order as you read.

Advanced: Why does Charles G. Shaw use white on blue rather than color illustrations? What effect does that create?

STEAM Activity: Light & Shadow Silhouette Art — Visual Art + Science + Creative Expression (22 min)

Part 1: The Science of Silhouettes

1. Recall that in the book, every shape is a silhouette. Ask a student to share what that word means.
2. Share that today you will be making silhouettes. Demonstrate your chosen method:
 - **Option A:** Hold your hand between the flashlight and paper. "Notice there are no details inside the shadow, just the outline. That's exactly what Charles G. Shaw did in his book!"
 - **Option B:** Cut a shape from black paper and glue onto white or blue paper — just like the white shapes in the book, but reversed.
 - **Option C:** Tape your cut paper shape to the window and let light through — the shape becomes a silhouette.
 - **Option D:** Place laminated silhouette cutouts on the light table and explore how light changes the shapes.

Part 2: Create Your Silhouette

1. You can make a silhouette of anything — an animal, a tree, a person, a cloud shape, something from our book, or something from your imagination.
2. Have the students spend time creating their silhouettes.
3. As students create, circulate and ask:
 - How is your silhouette being formed? What causes the shadow or dark shape?
 - What shape did you choose, and does it remind you of anything else, like in our book?
 - Look at your silhouette from different angles. Does it look like something different from each side?

Part 3: Label & Display (3 min)

1. Students write or dictate at the bottom of their silhouette: 'It looked like a _____. But it was really _____' — just like the pattern in our book!
2. Display silhouettes together as a class gallery. Arrange on a blue background if possible to mirror the look of the book.

Option A



Option B



Option C



Option D



Modifications:

Emerging: Pre-cut silhouette shapes from black paper (simple animals, trees, clouds, hands). Let students choose one, glue onto blue paper, and add their label with educator support.

Advanced: Create a silhouette scene — multiple shapes arranged to tell a mini story. Write 2–3 sentences: 'It looked like ____ and _____. But it was really _____. I transformed the shape by _____.'

Closing & Reflection (5 min)

1. Have the students hold up their silhouettes and tell a friend their silhouette is magnificent!
2. Quick vocabulary review: "I'll say a definition — you say the word!"
 - 'A dark shape or outline seen against a lighter background.' → [silhouette!]
 - 'To watch or study something very carefully.' → [observe!]
 - 'To completely change from one thing into something very different.' → [transform!]

GRAB AND GO LESSON PACKAGE

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

Lesson 3 of 3 — Reader's Theater & Cloud Imagination Art

⌚ 60 minutes • 🌱 Cloud Imagination Art (Art + Science + Creative Expression)

BOOK

It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw

BIG IDEA

We can retell stories with our voices and express our imagination through art.

VOCAB WORD

VOCAB FOCUS — Review: silhouette, observe, imagine, transform

Materials

SUPPLIES

- It Looked Like Spilt Milk by Charles G. Shaw
- Printed Reader's Theater scripts — one per student
- Helix K-2 Daily Check-In Form (student copies)
- Vocabulary from Lesson 2 (displayed for reference)
- Blue construction paper or cardstock — one sheet per student
- White paint (tempera or washable) — small cups, one per student
- Paintbrushes OR sponges (students may also use fingers/hands)
- Pencils for labeling finished artwork
- **TO PRINT:** Helix Daily Check-In Form; Reader's Theater Script

OPTIONAL / GRADE LEVEL SPECIFIC

- Optional: simple props — a white scarf or tissue paper for the Cloud role
- Optional: white oil pastels or white crayons for resist effects
- Optional: cotton balls, dryer sheets, or shaving cream for textured cloud effects
- Optional: display students' silhouettes from Lesson 2 as a gallery backdrop for the performance
- Optional: cloud type reference chart from Lesson 1 for ongoing science connection

Pre-Lesson Set-Up

1. Print the Reader's Theater script — one copy per student. Fold in half for easy handling.
2. **Assign roles in advance:** Assign roles in advance: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, the Cloud, and All (whole group lines). For smaller groups, combine Narrators or rotate so every student has an individual role.
3. Set out Check-In Forms and emoji/feeling word cards at each student's spot.
4. Prepare paint stations: small cups of white tempera or washable paint and one sheet of blue paper at each spot.
5. Display students' silhouettes from Lesson 2 as a gallery backdrop if possible — creates continuity across the three lessons.
6. Display the vocabulary anchor chart from Lesson 2 for ongoing reference.

Welcome & Student Check-In (8 min)

1. Greet students warmly. Have students complete their Check-In Form. After 2–3 minutes, invite sharing.
2. Play the Say It Game with the word Expressive.
 - Say it together.
 - **Define:** "When you use your face, voice, or body to show clearly what you feel or think — when your emotions come through in how you act or create."
 - Say expressive in an expressive way! [Try angry! Sad! Excited! Sleepy!]

Modifications:

Emerging: Emoji chart for pointing. Invite students to show their expressive face.

Advanced: What is the difference between being expressive and being loud? Can you be expressive quietly?

Activate Prior Knowledge: Story Retelling (8 min)

1. Recall the order of the shapes in the story. "With your partner, take turns retelling the shapes from the story in order — see how many you can name! Go!" Give partners 2–3 minutes.
2. Check together and review the order of the shapes as a class with the book.
3. "What is the one idea that Charles G. Shaw wants every reader to take away from this book? Tell your partner in one sentence." Call on 3–4 students to share.

Science of Reading: Reader's Theater Fluency (12 min)

Note: Reader's Theater is a research-supported fluency strategy. It builds reading rate, accuracy, expression, and prosody. The repetitive pattern of this book gives students a predictable scaffold and repeated practice with the same structure across many turns.

1. Introduce Reader's Theater as like a play focused on the expression in the voices of readers.
2. Assign roles: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, the Cloud, and All. For smaller groups, combine Narrators, or rotate roles after the first run.
3. Complete a cold read where students read to themselves and share any words they do not know.
4. Perform the script through once.
5. If time allows, switch roles and perform again.

Discussion questions after performance:

- Which role was your favorite to read? Why?
- Which vocabulary word from our anchor chart fits this script best? [imagine! silhouette! observe!]
- How did you use your voice to make the mystery feel real?
- If you added one more line to this script — one more shape the cloud could look like — what would you write?

Modifications:

Emerging: Pre-highlight the student's specific lines on the script. Pair with a buddy who can whisper-prompt if needed. K students may participate as part of the 'All' group or take the Cloud role with support.

Advanced: Add one original line to the script during the second read — a new shape the cloud could look like, written in the same sentence pattern as the rest of the book.

Kindergarten	• Participate in the 'All' group or take the Cloud role with support. • Focus on expression over accuracy — all attempts are celebrated.
1st Grade	• Take on a named role (Narrator 1 or 2, or the Cloud). • Focus on reading with a clear, expressive voice matched to the mystery of the story.
2nd Grade	• Take on individual named roles independently. • After the first performance, add one original line in the correct sentence pattern and read it aloud.

STEAM Activity: Cloud Imagination Art — Art + Science + Creative Expression (20 min)

Part 1: Introduce the Activity

1. Explain that Charles G Shaw used one art technique to create all of the art in the book: white paint on blue paper.
2. Introduce that the students will be creating their own cloud shapes on paper. Students will be creative and decide what they want their cloud to look like.

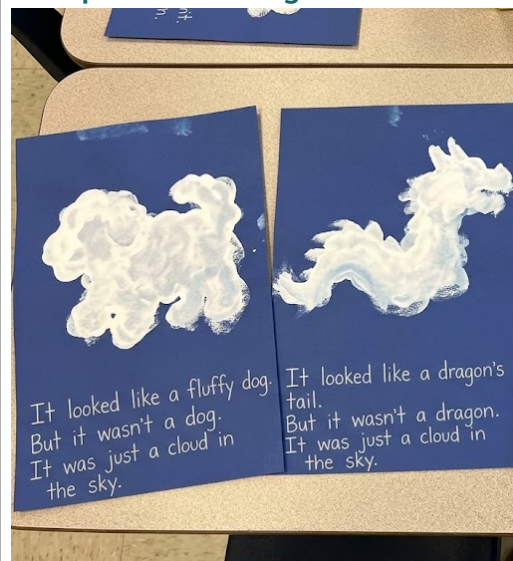
Part 2: Paint & Imagine

1. "Take your blue paper and your white paint. You can use a brush, a sponge, or your fingers — experiment! Your shape should have soft edges and unexpected bumps, like a real cloud. It shouldn't be a perfect square or circle."
2. As students paint, circulate and ask:
 - What are you seeing in your shape as it develops?
 - Does it look like something different from each angle?
 - Which vocabulary word describes the shape you're making? [silhouette, expressive, imagine...]
3. When paint is dry or mostly dry, students label: "It looked like a _____. But it wasn't a _____. It was just a cloud in the sky."

Part 3: Gallery Display

1. Have the students arrange their art like an art gallery.
2. Allow time for students to look at all of the cloud art. If students see something different in the clouds, they can tell a friend. Emphasize that different imaginations see different things.

Example Student Image



Modifications:

Emerging: Pre-cut or pre-paint a simple cloud blob shape for students who find open-ended painting challenging. Let them focus on the labeling and sharing steps.

Advanced: Create TWO cloud paintings — one that looks like something real and one that is completely abstract. Write two full sentences for each: 'It looked like ___ because ___. But it was just a cloud formed by ___.'

Closing & Celebration (5 min)

1. "Charles G. Shaw looked up at a cloud and saw spilt milk. What did YOU see?" Invite 3–4 students to share their cloud painting titles or what they saw in someone else's art.
2. Emphasize the big idea: "Different imaginations. Same cloud. That is the point of this entire book."
3. Reinforce the feeling word expressive. Celebrate that the students have been expressive with voice, hands, paint, and words — readers, scientists, artists, and performers!

Sound (Elkonin) Box Mats

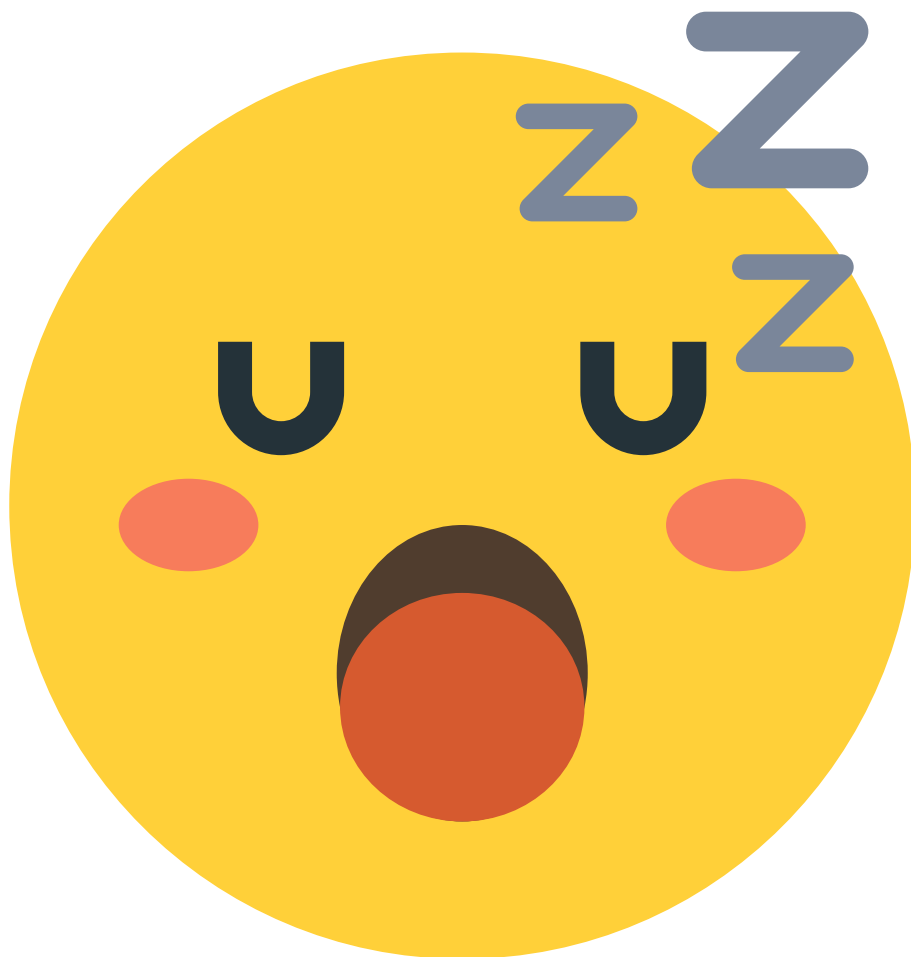
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Happy



Sleepy



Angry



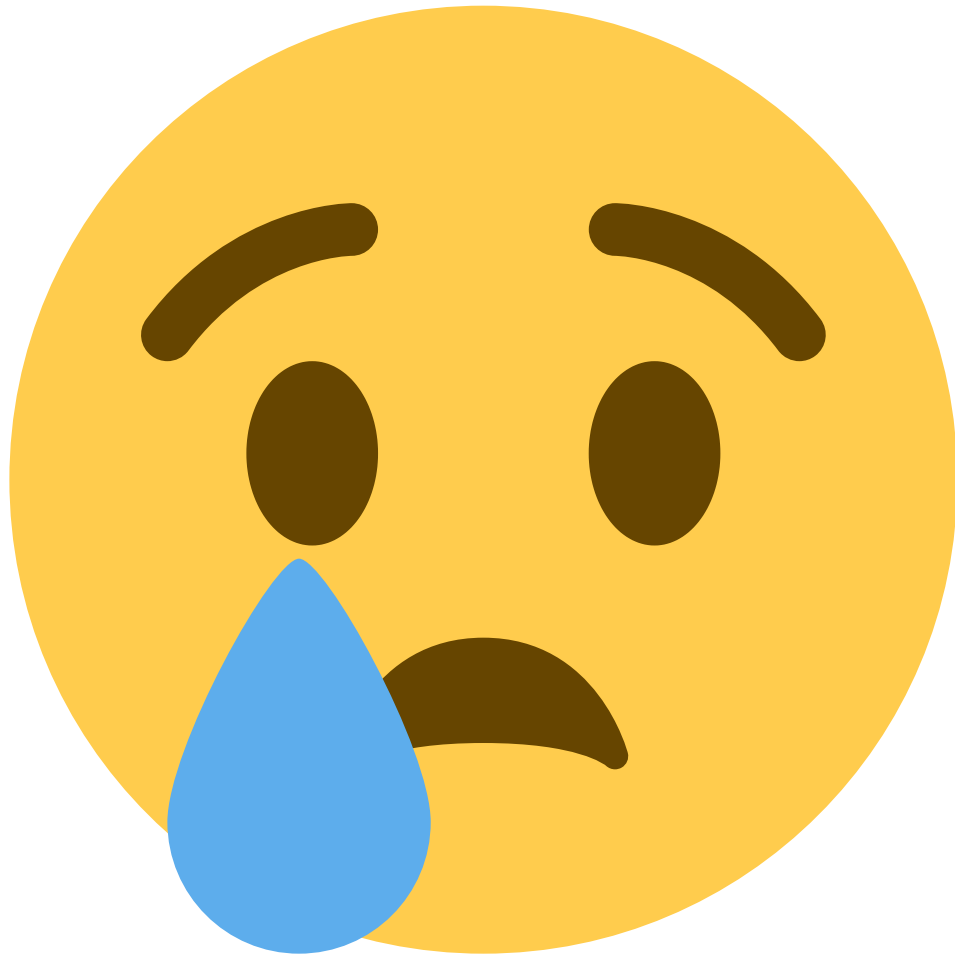
Sick



Nervous



Sad



Scared



Silly



Frustrated



Excited



Calm



Afraid



Confused



Caring





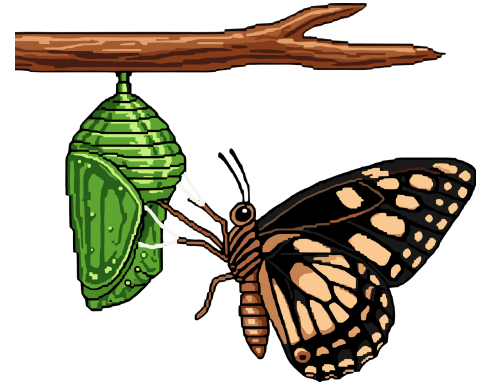
SILHOUETTE



OBSERVE

 Sweet girl sitting at desk with scrapbook or reading fairy tale book. Kid with creative imagination. Happy child making notes in whimsical notebook. Colored flat vector illustration isolated on white

IMAGINE



TRANSFORM

Day of the Week:



Date

What will I do today?

Cut and paste at least 4 pictures of what you will do today. Glue them in the order that you will complete them.

1

2

3

4

How am I feeling?

Cut and paste the feeling faces you are feeling right now.

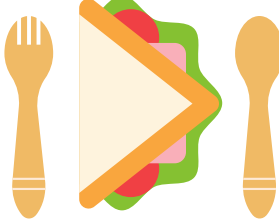
How am I feeling?



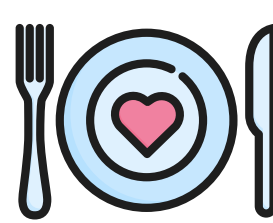
Brush Teeth



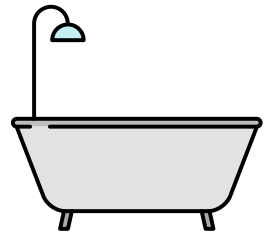
Eat Breakfast



Eat Lunch



Eat Dinner



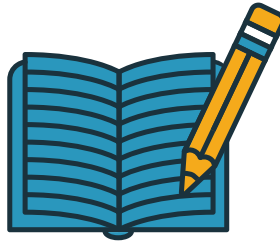
Shower or Bath



Read



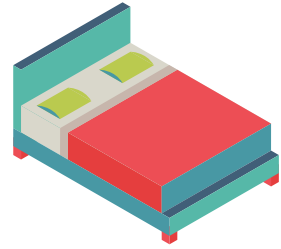
School



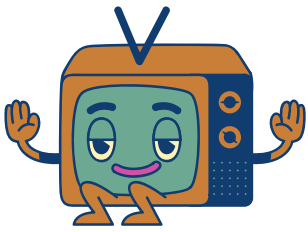
Homework



Exercise



Get ready for bed



Watch TV



Do Your Chores



Wake Up



Play with friends
or family



Relax



Happy



Sleepy



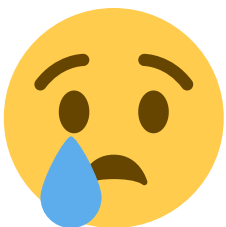
Angry



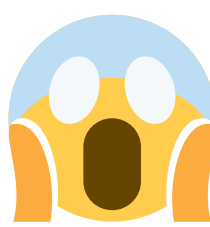
Sick



Nervous



Sad



Scared



Silly



Frustrated



Excited

Cut out each of the schedule squares and the feelings and emotions. Use these to complete your daily reflection. Use the blank boxes to create your own!

It Looked Like Spilt Milk Reader's Theater

Roles: Narrator 1, Narrator 2, The Cloud, All (Everyone in the class)

--- OPENING ---

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like Spilt Milk.

Narrator 2: But it wasn't Spilt Milk.

The Cloud: I was something else entirely.

All: What did it look like?

--- RABBIT ---

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like a Rabbit.

Narrator 2: With two long, soft ears,

Narrator 1: and a round, fluffy tail.

All: But it wasn't a Rabbit.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

--- BIRD ---

Narrator 2: Sometimes it looked like a Bird.

Narrator 1: Wings spread wide,

Narrator 2: soaring without a sound.

All: But it wasn't a Bird.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

--- TREE ---

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like a Tree.

Narrator 2: Tall and still,

Narrator 1: with branches reaching up.

All: But it wasn't a Tree.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

--- SQUIRREL ---

Narrator 2: Sometimes it looked like a Squirrel.

Narrator 1: With a big, bushy tail

Narrator 2: curled up behind it.

All: But it wasn't a Squirrel.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

--- BIRTHDAY CAKE ---

Narrator 1: Sometimes it looked like a Birthday Cake.

Narrator 2: With tiny candles glowing,

Narrator 1: and a wish waiting to be made.

All: But it wasn't a Birthday Cake.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

--- YOUR TURN --- (Optional: students fill in their own shape)

Narrator 1 or 2: Sometimes it looked like a ____.

All: But it wasn't a ____.

The Cloud: It was just a cloud in the sky.

--- CLOSING ---

Narrator 1: It wasn't Spilt Milk.

Narrator 2: It wasn't a Rabbit.

Narrator 1: It wasn't a Bird, or a Tree, or a Squirrel.

Narrator 2: It wasn't a Birthday Cake.

All: It was just a cloud in the sky.

The Cloud: But what a cloud it was.



CLOUD



LOUD



MILK



SILK



BIRD



HEARD