

**FARRAR STRAUS GIROUX**  
*Teachers' Guide*

**RAIN RAIN RIVERS**

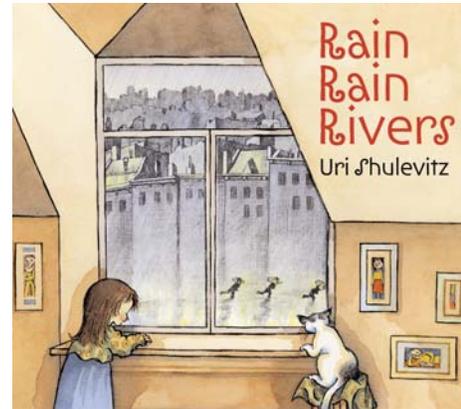
by Uri Shulevitz

**Grade Level**

Kindergarten–Grade 3

**Themes**

- Bodies of Water
- Water Cycle
- Plants
- Rain
- Natural Setting / Community
- Outdoor Play



**Introduction**

A little girl listens to the rain. She imagines rain falling everywhere, from rooftops to streets, from fields to streams, from rivers to the ocean.

**Pre-Reading**

- Have you ever watched the rain fall?
- What does the rain sound like as it falls?
- Have you ever seen a rainbow?
- Where does the rain go?
- What do you like to do on a rainy day?
- What is your favorite kind of weather?
- How does rain help plants grow?

**Discussion**

- Where does rain come from?
- What are the three phases of the water cycle? (*evaporation, condensation, precipitation*)
- Why do we need rain?
- Who needs water to live? (*people, animals, plants*)
- Do you think the I in this story likes rain? How can you tell?
- What does the little girl anticipate doing after the rain stops? (*e.g., sailing boats, playing in mud puddles, seeing plant growth*)
- What do you like to do after it rains?  
Refer to the page: “I’ll jump over pieces of sky in the gutter.” What does the author mean?
- Is this book a story or poem? Why do you think so?
- What happens to plants when they need rain?
- What happens to plants after it has rained?

**Reading Across the Curriculum**

**Writing**

Ask students to describe their favorite kind of weather. Have them write a poem describing this type of weather (*e.g., how it sounds, looks, and feels*). Wind, rain, sun, and snow are especially appropriate for this activity. Students can also illustrate their poems with pen and ink and watercolor, like the author, or in a different medium.

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Reread pages from *Rain Rain Rivers* on which the author describes the sound of the rain. ("The rain is pattering . . . rushing . . . gushing . . .") Ask students to brainstorm other words to describe the rain's sound. Create a list of light-rain words (e.g., *drip*, *drizzle*, *plip*), as well as heavy-downpour words (e.g., *splat*, *flash*, *pound*). Encourage students to be innovative, perhaps even creating their own words to represent the sounds of rain.

### Science

Perform an experiment that demonstrates the three phases of the water cycle. (For young students, you can introduce this activity by telling them you are going to make it rain in their classroom. This immediately and actively engages the students in the experiment.)

**Materials:** hot plate, clear glass pot, metal pan, tray of ice cubes

1. Fill the pot halfway with water. Place it on the hot plate at a high temperature. Wait for the water to boil. When steam begins to rise, explain how the water, as it is heated, turns from a liquid into a gas (water vapor). This demonstrates a rapid process of **evaporation**.
2. Turn off the hot plate, but leave the pot on the burner. Empty the tray of ice cubes into the metal pan. Hold the metal pan above the pot of water. Ask students to observe how water droplets form on the bottom of the pan as the warm air rises and meets a cold surface. This illustrates **condensation**.
3. Continue to hold the pan above the pot. Soon the droplets of water will become heavy and fall into the pot below, demonstrating precipitation. You may wish to discuss different types of **precipitation** (e.g., rain, sleet, snow) and how they form.

Have students list the different bodies of water referred to in *Rain Rain Rivers* (i.e., *pond*, *stream*, *rill*, *brook*, *river*, *sea*, *ocean*). Then ask students to divide the list into two categories, fresh water and salt water. Then begin a discussion about salt water. Inform students that rivers and lakes can also contain salt, though the concentration is usually less dense than in the ocean (except for the Great Salt Lake). Ask students to hypothesize how salt water forms. Explain that salt is constantly being deposited into the water when rivers and streams rush over rocks containing sodium compounds.

*Rain Rain Rivers* is an excellent book to introduce a plant unit. After reading the book, discuss factors necessary for plant growth (i.e., *air*, *sunlight*, *water*, *soil*). Ask students to predict if these elements are required for plants to grow.

Begin an experiment which will test the students' predictions from above.

**Materials:** five small cups or planters, a package of seeds, soil, and recording sheet.

1. Prepare the five small cups or planters (label them 1-5), each containing two or three seeds. Set up the following conditions:
  - Cup 1: No soil, but provide air, sunlight, and water.
  - Cup 2: No air (pack soil very firmly), but provide soil, sunlight, and water.

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Cup 3: No sunlight (cover planter and put in a dark spot), but provide air, soil, and water.

Cup 4: No water, but provide soil, air, and sunlight.

Cup 5: Provide soil, air, sunlight, and water.

2. Give students a sheet to record their predictions about the outcome of each of the five conditions.
3. Two weeks later, have students observe each plant and record their findings. (Young students can make drawings, while older students should also include a written description.) Ask students to discuss their predictions and observations. Were there any surprises? What did they learn?

### Math

Have students plant their own seeds. These should be of different types of plants. After individual plants have sprouted and developed in the classroom (approximately two weeks), have students compare the heights of the plants. Ask students to measure their plants with a strip of green paper. Have them cut the paper to match the height of their plant. On the paper they should record their name and the type of seed they planted. Then meet in a circle and place the paper strips onto a chart. Discuss the results. Ask students: Which type of plant grew the tallest? How much taller is one plant than another? Encourage students to use rulers to make comparisons between plants. Are there some plants that failed to thrive? Ask students to recall the previous science experiments and to hypothesize what may have hindered the growth of those plants.

Have students create a class weather graph. Students record their favorite kind of weather on an index card and place it in the appropriate column on a large piece of chart paper. When the graph is completed, students are asked to compare and contrast the columns. Ask students which weather types are the most and least favorite; ask how many more or less votes one weather type has than another, and how many more one type needs to equal another type. These questions require students to integrate computation with graphing skills.

### Social Studies

The illustrations in *Rain Rain Rivers* depict different settings, including an urban area (*i.e., the town*), a rural area (*e.g. fields and hills*), and a coastal area (*i.e., where the ever meets the ocean*). Ask students to compare different types of settings and communities. Would they prefer to live in a large city or a small town? On a farm or by the ocean? How does the natural setting of a community affect its people? To answer this question, students may be asked to research a specific geographic location and share their findings with the class.

### Art

Begin a discussion about outdoor play. Discuss what the child in *Rain Rain Rivers* enjoys playing, and ask students what activities they enjoy. Have the students write a brief description of their favorite outdoor activity on an index card. Then ask students to bring in a shoe box from home. Provide students with a variety of materials, including cardboard, paper, paint, pipe cleaners, spools, small boxes, and fabric scraps. Have the students design a diorama portraying their activity. Encourage them to use creativity and detail. Remind them to include the setting, people, and

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any equipment their activity required. When the diorama is completed, students should affix their index card to its base.

### **Music**

A rain stick is a musical instrument usually made out of bamboo; the inside is lined with wooden spokes and filled with dried beans. When the stick is inverted, the beans fall and hit the wooden spokes, making a sound like falling rain. Tell students they are going to make their own rain stick. They will each need: a paper-towel tube, one cup small dried beans, two small pieces of foil or plastic wrap, two rubber bands, and approximately twenty thin nails ( $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long). Have students decorate the outside of the paper-towel tube. Then have them carefully insert the nails through the tube. (Young students will need adult assistance.) Nails should be spaced about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch apart and staggered down the tube on alternating side. Then secure it with a rubber band. Students should pour the dried beans into the other end of the tube and then cover it. When both ends are secured, students may try out their rain sticks. The beans should be in one end of the tube. Have students invert the tube to hear the sound of falling rain.



### **About the Author**

Uri Shulevitz, a Caldecott Medalist, is the author and illustrator of numerous books, including *Snow*, a Caldecott Honor Book, and *So Sleepy Story*. He lives in New York City.

### ***For more information on Uri Shulevitz:***

#### ***Web sites:***

[www.fsgkidsbooks.com](http://www.fsgkidsbooks.com)

Includes a biography of the author and additional information about his books.

### **Rain Rain Rivers**

By Uri Shulevitz

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**An ALA Notable Children's Book  
Fanfare, *The Horn Book's* Honor List**

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*Rain Rain Rivers* Teachers' Guide prepared by S. Ornstein.