



# Extended Literacy Adventure: It's Raining, It's Pouring!

Exploring nonfiction about rain and the water cycle

Aventura: Lluve a Cántaros

Literatura de no ficción sobre la lluvia y el ciclo del agua

**Age Range:** K + up

**Group Size:** flexible

**Time Range:** 45-60 min



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## Adventure Goals:

Our goal for every adventure is for children to [have fun with books and reading!](#) In this adventure we will read a nonfiction book together; conduct an experiment; and [explore several different styles of nonfiction books to read and borrow!](#)

\*Note: this adventure could be repeated multiple times by reading about and conducting experiments on different topics.



## Measurable Objectives and Outcomes:

**Objective:** Participants will conduct a rain cloud in a cup experiment and observe the results.

**Outcome:** Participants are able to describe their observations in words or in pictures.

**Objective:** Explore several styles of nonfiction books including narrative nonfiction, active nonfiction (how-to books), and traditional nonfiction.

**Outcome:** Participants will find a nonfiction book that they enjoy.



## Adventure Outline:

Nonfiction books help to build children's [background knowledge](#) and excite their natural curiosity about the world around them. In this adventure we will:

1. [Hook: Human Rainstorm & Brainstorm](#) Make a rainstorm with our bodies and brainstorm what we know about rain.
2. [Getting Started: Read-Aloud](#) Read a nonfiction story together.
3. [Activity: Rain Cloud in a Cup](#) Conduct an experiment about rain .
4. [Book Browsing: Nonfiction Bonanza!](#) Explore nonfiction to read and borrow.
5. [Wrap-up: Share Out Book Choices](#) Share the books we browsed!





## Supplies:

- A nonfiction book featuring rain and/or the water cycle to use as a read-aloud. See: [Nonfiction Read-Aloud Suggestions](#)
- A large enough selection of nonfiction books so that all participants have choices that match their reading level, interests, and language needs
- Photocopies of experiment instructions for the group (See Experimento de nubes en un vaso for experiment instructions in Spanish)
- Pencils for all participants
- Paper for recording observations
- Sticky notes
- Whiteboard or flipchart paper and appropriate markers
- Clear cups for all participants
- Shaving Cream
- Food Dye
- Pipettes (or spoons)
- Water (enough for all participants to fill their cups a couple of times)
- Bucket or access to sink



## Considerations for Planning

- How will you make sure all participants can see the experiment instructions?
  - Do you have access to a projector or document camera?
  - Could you make enough photocopies of the experiment pages in the book you use?
- Where will participants dispose of water and shaving cream after the experiment?
- How will you distribute the supplies to the participants?
- See [Variations and Extended Learning](#) for alternative experiment ideas.

# Adventure Plan

## 1. Hook: Human Rainstorm and Brainstorm (10 min)

### Practice Round:

**Say:** *We are going to make a rainstorm right here in this room! First, let's practice the sounds. Make sure you have some room around you to move your body. It is okay if you don't want to make all of the sounds. Everyone can participate as much or as little as they want. Ready?:*

- *Start by making a rubbing sound with your hands or another part of your body (demonstrate a couple of ways to make a rubbing sound)*
- *Now tap very lightly*
- *Now tap a little bit louder*
- *Now clap or slap*
- *Now stomp or slap loudly*

### Human Rainstorm:

- **Say:** *Okay, I think we are ready to make our storm. Follow along with what I am doing, let's keep our voices off and our imaginations on!*

Move through each of the actions silently until you get to stomping or slapping loudly, then reverse the order until everyone is still and quiet.

### Let's Think About This! What do we know about rain? What do we wonder about rain?

#### What we know: Brainstorm

- Say: What are some things you know about rain?

#### Write participants' ideas on a whiteboard or flipchart paper.

- You can paraphrase participant responses to increase the richness and accuracy of the language.
  - Welcome and invite responses in the language(s) or language mixture in which participants feel comfortable.
  - Rephrase and expand on participants' thoughts to enhance language skills and vocabulary without overly correcting.

## Navigation



**Variation:** Increase the accessibility of this activity by including principles of universal design such as providing multiple ways for participants to participate.



**Vocabulary**  
"Rainstorm" in Spanish = *una tormenta de lluvia / un aguacero*

**Universal Design:** Incorporating principles of universal design can help libraries become more inclusive.



**Short on Time?** You can omit the practice round if you feel confident that your participants can follow along with your movements without verbal cues.

**Oral Language Development and Background Knowledge:** Providing lots of opportunities for participants to think about and discuss what they know and what they would like to know helps to develop their oral language skills, expands their existing knowledge, and fosters engagement.



**Vocabulary**  
"Rain" in Spanish = *la lluvia*  
"Wonder" in Spanish = *considerar / gustaria saber*



**Variation:** Have a lot of pre-writers in your group? Not a lot of grown-ups to support independent writing? Do a group brainstorm instead! Use a whiteboard or flipchart paper to record participants questions.

- Things to try: validating individual views; connecting observations; restating with rich vocabulary; and pointing out differences of opinion.

### What we wonder about: Write

**Say:** *What do you wonder about rainstorms? Take a minute to think and write or draw a picture of your question on one of these sticky notes. We will see if we can answer some of our questions in our activities today! You may write in whatever language or combination of languages you wish. You can work together with your family, friends or neighbors if you want! Here is an example sentence to get you started if you want. When you are done, come put your sticky note on the wall!*

Make sure everyone has access to sticky notes and pencils. Write the sentence prompts on a whiteboard or flipchart paper. Make sure to read the sentence prompts aloud to the group.

### Sentence Prompts:

- I wonder...?
  - *Me gustaría saber...*
- How does rain ...?
  - *¿Cómo hace la lluvia...?*
- Why is rain...?
  - *¿Por qué la lluvia...?*



## 2. Getting Started: Read-Aloud (10 min)

Read a nonfiction book about rain and/or the water cycle aloud to the group.

**Before Reading:** Read some of the sticky note questions participants wrote aloud.

**Say:** *We are about to read a nonfiction book. Nonfiction books give facts and explain ideas about all sorts of topics. Listen carefully because we may find out the answer to some of our questions while we are reading!*

### During Reading:

- Point out any parts in your read-aloud that are common to nonfiction books and briefly show how they are used. Examples could include: the table of contents, glossary, index, captions, charts, and backmatter.
- Act it Out! Engage participants by inviting them to pretend to be water flowing in a river or rain falling to the ground.

**Translanguaging:** Encouraging participants to use their entire language repertoire to discuss and make meaning supports multilingual children's language development, social emotional growth, and affirms their cultural and language identities.



**Tip:** Sentence prompts give structure that supports young children, reluctant speakers and those learning English to share their ideas. You can allow participants to alter and/or deviate from these as they wish.



**Vocabulary**  
"Nonfiction" in Spanish = *no ficción*

**Extended Learning:** Introducing new vocabulary offers many opportunities for extended learning. Try some of these if you have some time.

- Define or restate in understandable terms any weather vocabulary your participants need to know to understand.
- Encourage questions by modeling your thinking while reading. For example, *This picture of lightning is making me wonder how a lightning storm starts?* Point out if your question is answered in the text.

**After Reading:** Take a look at the sticky notes again. Did any of the questions get answered during the read-aloud? Go back and reread passages that answer participants’ questions as needed. Many nonfiction books contain longer explanations of concepts and ideas in the back. Consider reading backmatter aloud to answer questions.

**Say:** *Let’s take another look at some of the questions we had before we read. Were anyone’s question answered?*



### 3. Activity: Rain Cloud in a Cup (10 min)

This experiment will help participants understand how clouds make rain. It is also an opportunity to show participants how to read and follow instructions to do an experiment.

**Say:** *We just read a book about rain and learned lots of interesting things! Now we are going to do an experiment to learn more about how rain forms. Many books and websites contain instructions for how to do experiments. Let’s all take a look at the instructions for the experiment we will be doing today.*

#### Make sure everyone has access to:

- Photocopy of experiment instructions
- Pencils
- Paper for recording observations
- A Clear Cup
- Shaving Cream
- Food Dye
- Water
- Bucket or sink
- Pipette or spoon

Walk through the steps of the experiment together. Discuss with participants:

#### Gradual Release of

Responsibility: By modeling thinking while reading you are fostering participants’ comprehension skills through the gradual release of responsibility.



#### Vocabulary

“Experiment”  
in Spanish = *el experimento*

#### Variations and Extended

Learning: Is this experiment to messy for your space? Want to set up a few experiment stations with different activities to extend learning? Try out some of these experiment ideas.

#### Family Engagement:

Share a family engagement message about different types of reading we do in our daily lives.



#### Vocabulary:

“Precipitation”  
in Spanish = *la precipitación*  
“Cloud” in Spanish = *la/una nube*  
“Air” in Spanish = *el aire*

- What each of the materials represent. Example: *the shaving cream represents clouds, the food coloring represents precipitation, and the water represents air.*
- How to follow the steps in the directions. Example: *We need to make sure we all have these materials ready. Then, we follow the steps in order from the top to the bottom of the list.*

Do the first few steps of the experiment together until you get to the part where you add the water droplets and food dye. Stop and discuss what participants think will happen when you add the food dye and water droplets. Write sentence prompts on a whiteboard or flipchart paper to help participants formulate ideas as needed.

**Say:** *What do you think will happen when you add the droplets of water and food dye?*

**Sentence Prompt:**

- *I think that when we add food dye and water droplets...*

Record participants' ideas on a whiteboard or sheet of flipchart paper. Invite participants to respond in whatever language or combination of languages feels most comfortable to them.

- You can paraphrase participant responses to increase the richness and accuracy of the language.
  - Welcome and invite responses in the language(s) or language mixture in which participants feel comfortable.
  - Try to enhance language without making participants feel corrected. Repeat back what a participant says to expand on their thoughts or to express the thought using appropriate grammar and syntax.
  - Other things to try:
    - ◇ validating individual views;
    - ◇ connecting observations;
    - ◇ restating with rich vocabulary; and
    - ◇ pointing out differences of opinion.

**Say:** *Now it is time to experiment! You may work by yourself or with your family, a friend, or a neighbor. Make sure to record your observations about what happens after you add the dyed water to your cloud of foam. You can write or draw your observations. If you need help writing you can ask a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or raise your hand.*

Move around the room and help participants as needed. Encourage participants to think and observe as they conduct their experiment.

**Extended Learning:** Let participants do the experiment a couple of different times using the same cup but with fresh water, shaving cream and food dye. Provide a bucket or other container for participants to dump out the used ingredients.



**Tip:** Encourage adult participants to support their young scientists by asking open-ended questions about what they are observing.

Consider writing up these questions for adult participants to see and talk about with their young scientists:

- What do you observe?
- Is what you observed what you thought would happen?
- Why do you think that happened?

**Wrap Up:** Bring the group back together and discuss the experiment.

**Say:** *Let's talk about what we observed during our experiment. You can respond in whatever language or combination of languages feels most comfortable to you.*

- What did you observe?
- Was that what you expected to happen?
- Why do you think that happened?
- How do you think this is related to how our weather works?
- Did the experiment help answer any of our questions from earlier?

Expand upon participants' observations as needed. Guide participants to understand what was happening in the experiment:

- The shaving cream represents clouds and the food coloring represents precipitation.
- In the water cycle, water droplets in a cloud continue to grow until they become heavy and fall through the cloud down to the Earth.
- The same thing happened in the experiment we just did. The food coloring got heavier as you added drops until it got so heavy that it fell through the cloud to the bottom of the cup like rain.

## 4. Book Browsing: Nonfiction Bonanza! (15 min)

**Booktalk:** If time, pick 2 or 3 books to briefly booktalk to the group. This is a good time to show participants that there are several different kinds of nonfiction:

- Narrative nonfiction: tells a true story
- Active nonfiction: tells you how to do something (connect to the experiment participants just finished)
- Traditional or Browsable: Tell you about a topic or give lots of different facts usually on a theme.

**Open Exploration:** Invite participants to select books and read them either silently or with a caregiver. Invite any caregivers in the room to



**Tip:** Allow participants to work in familial or language based pairs or groups.



### Vocabulary

“Observation” in Spanish = *la/una observación*

“Water Cycle” in Spanish = *el ciclo del agua*



**Tip:** Consider organizing the books by type of nonfiction as well as level to help participants identify different types. For example, make a display of fact books, active books, and narrative books for each reading level you are representing.

participate by browsing books themselves and/or reading with/to their child(ren). Walk around and help participants find good books for them. Encourage participants to:

- Try out multiple books to figure out a book that will work for them.
- Pick a book with an activity that they might want to try out at home.
- Pick a book or two to check out!

## 5. Wrap Up: Share Out Book Choices (15 min)

Invite participants to share a book that they are going to borrow and tell why they chose it. Invite participants to respond in whatever language or combination of languages feels most comfortable. Provide a sentence prompt on the whiteboard or flipchart paper as needed:

### Sentence prompts:

*I chose the book...*

*I am excited to read it because...*

**Say:** *I hope everybody had fun today reading and experimenting! Now, at the end of an adventure, I like to ask these three very important questions! I'll give you a hint: the answer to these questions is always... ¡Que sí! Or Yes!*

1. *Are we happy to help you find good books to read? (Yes!)  
¿Nos gusta ayudarte a encontrar buenos libros para leer? (¡Que sí!)*
2. *Do we love to talk about books with you? (Yes!)  
¿Nos gusta conversar sobre los libros contigo? (¡Que sí!)*
3. *Is all reading good reading? (Yes!)  
¿Toda lectura es buena lectura? (¡Que sí!)*

**Just Right Books:** Readers thrive when they have access and exposure to lots of books. Library staff are proven experts at matching readers with just-right books.



**Variation:** Consider including ebooks and/or podcasts to foster [joint media engagement](#).

**Modeling Reading:** Encouraging caregivers to read with/ alongside child participants highlights the important role that caregivers play in fostering a love of reading in children.

**Family Engagement:** Share a family engagement message during book browsing time about modeling reading behavior.

**Extended Learning:** If you have time at the end, consider extending the wrap-up with a think-pair-share activity.

## ICON KEY



Key  
Element



A Tip



Time



Spanish  
word



Choice



Variations/  
More ideas



# Variations and Extended Learning

Consider some of these tips for engaging participants of various ages, cultures, languages and abilities.

## Hook: Human Rainstorm Activity

### Variation:

- Increase the accessibility of this activity by including principles of universal design such providing multiple ways for participants to participate. Consider including some of the following modifications:
  - Provide shakers, rhythm sticks, or other instruments for participants to use to make sounds.
  - Modeling different ways to make sounds with one's body or one's voice.



### Short on Time:

- You can omit the practice round if you feel confident that your participants can follow along with your movements without verbal cues.

## Adventure: (20 mins): Rain Cloud in a Cup

**Variation: Alternative/Additional Experiments:** Feel free to try a different experiment with your participants. Here are some ideas and resources for experiments about rain and the water cycle:

### Print books that include experiments:

[Step-by-Step Experiments with the Water Cycle](#), Shirley Duke. 2012.

[Water: Explore, Create, and Investigate](#), Isabel Thomas. 2016

[The Water Cycle](#), Nate Ball. 2017

[I am the Rain](#), John Paterson. 2018

### Websites:

[The Water Projects](#)

[Science Sparks](#)

### Extended Learning:

Consider selecting 3 or 4 experiments and setting up stations around your program space for participants and caregivers to explore. Additional experiments are available through the books and websites above or

you can use some you already know how to do. Consider including experiments that highlight different parts of the water cycle or different types of weather. You could also consider adding a station with a tablet set up to an interactive water cycle activity. Here is an example:

- The Blue Traveler: A Trip through the Water Cycle: <http://www.discoverwater.org/blue-traveler/>

## Book Browsing Time: Nonfiction Bonanza!

### Variation:

- Consider including a laptop or tablet with access to your library's ebook collection for participants to browse. Highlight an ebook during your booktalk to give participants some quick tips on how to open and navigate electronic books.
- Consider including a podcast for kids about science, specifically an episode that discusses water or the weather. Set up a listening station with a tablet or laptop and a pair of headphones during the non-fiction bonanza. The Brains On Podcast, a science podcast for kids, has an episode devoted to the weirdness of water:
  - Brains On! The Wonderful Weirdness of Water: <https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/american-public-media/brains-on/e/54590660>



## Wrap-up: Share Out Book Choices

**Extended Learning:** If you have enough time, consider inviting participants to share with another participant about one of the books they looked at before having them tell about what book they plan to borrow. Use a bell or a call and response clap to prompt participants to switch roles after about a minute.

**Say:** *Take a minute to share with your neighbor or someone you know about one of the books you were just reading that you like. You might want to tell them why they would want to read the book and share a favorite panel or page. If you have trouble thinking of what to say you could try (read the prompts and write them so everyone can see):*

### Sentence Prompts:

- I picked....
- You should try this book because....
- This is my favorite part of the book because....

## Vocabulary Extension Activities:

Introducing new vocabulary provides many opportunities for extension activities. Here are a few you might try:

- Write the word on an index card or small poster so children see the word as well as hear the word.
- Say and use the word as many times as possible and reasonable during your introduction to the word and throughout the activity.
- Ask the children to say the word aloud. Turn to a partner and say the word. It's important that they get used to pronouncing the word.
- Playful interactions with the word help reinforce comprehension. Ask children to make a face that looks like the word, act it out, draw it in the air, etc. If there is an antonym (word with opposite meaning) ask the children to act/draw this out as well.
- Using the word in context is the single best way for new word learning to solidify. Try to use the word throughout your activity. Encourage the students to try out using the word as well. Celebrate student's attempts as a whole group.
- Invite the children and families to try using these words throughout the rest of their day when possible.



## Passive Program:

Set up a display of non-fiction books about weather and the water cycle. Include a sign, poster, or handout with guiding questions for families and caregivers to use while reading:

### **Before Reading Discuss:**

- What do you know about rain? What do you wonder about rain?

### **While Reading:**

- Show young readers how to navigate the book by explaining how the table of contents, index, and/or glossary works.
- Encourage questions by modeling your thinking while reading. For example, *This picture of lightning is making me wonder how a lightning storm starts?* Point out if your question is answered in the text.

Provide materials and instructions to complete a “Rain in a Bag Experiment” at home. Consider including an example of the experiment for families in the library to observe. All you need is a sealable plastic bag, water, tape, and a window! Note: The linked experiment includes food dye which is a fun addition but not necessary to completing the experiment.

Materials for families to take home:

- A handout with instructions (could be on the same handout as the guided reading questions)
- A sealable plastic bag

## **Beginning Readers Storytime Integration:**

Include nonfiction books in storytime for beginning readers! Guide participants and caregivers in how to navigate and discuss nonfiction books:

### **Before Reading Discuss:**

- What do you know about \_\_\_\_? What do you wonder about \_\_\_\_?

### **While Reading:**

- Demonstrate how to navigate nonfiction books by explaining how the table of contents, index, and/or glossary works.



- Encourage questions by modeling your thinking while reading. For example, *This picture of lightning is making me wonder how a lightning storm starts?* Point out if your question is answered in the text.
- Put out a selection of nonfiction books for K-3rd grade students on a variety of topics and give families and caregivers time to explore them during or after storytime.

If you offer crafts or activities as part of your storytimes, consider doing a simple experiment or activity related to the nonfiction book you read.

## Nonfiction Read-Aloud Suggestions

- [Agua, Agüita/ Water, Little Water](#), Jorge Argueta. 2017
- [Bebió un dinosaurio de esta agua?](#), Robert Wells, 2013
- [Did a Dinosaur Drink this Water?](#), Robert Wells. 2013
- [Down Comes the Rain](#), Franklin Branley. 2017
- [I Am The Rain](#), John Peterson. 2018
- [It's Raining](#), Gail Gibbons. 2014
- [Rivers of Sunlight](#), Molly Bang. 2017
- [The Water Cycle](#), Nate Ball. 2017
- [Water Dance](#), Thomas Locker. 2002
- [Water is Water: A Book About the Water Cycle](#), Miranda Paul. 2015



# Adventure Supports



## Vocabulary

“Picture book” in Spanish = *libro de cuentos ilustrado*

Narrative Nonfiction: tells a true story

Active Nonfiction: tells you how to do something

Browsable Nonfiction: contains an assortment of facts often with a theme or related topics

Traditional Nonfiction: tells you all about a topic; like weather or space

“Rainstorm” in Spanish = *una tormenta de lluvia / un aguacero*

“Rain” in Spanish = *la lluvia*

“Wonder” in Spanish = *considerar / gustaría saber*

“Nonfiction” in Spanish = *no ficción*

“Experiment” in Spanish = *el experimento*

“Precipitation” in Spanish = *la precipitación*

“Cloud” in Spanish = *la/una nube*

“Air” in Spanish = *el aire*

“Observation” in Spanish = *la/una observación*

“Water Cycle” in Spanish = *el ciclo del agua*



## Family Engagement

### *Messages for Caregivers*

#### **Be a reading (and writing) role model!**

We’ve all noticed that kids tend to do and say what they see their important adults do and say. It’s great to read and write with your kids -- but also, make sure they see you reading and writing for yourself! And make sure they hear you talking about what you read and write.

#### **Call it “reading”! Point out all the ordinary reading you do**

We read all the time! But we don’t always point out that it’s reading. Using a recipe? Reading! Checking your shopping list? Reading! Looking something up online or checking your social media? It’s all reading! Help your kids notice the ways reading connects with everyday activities **by using the word “read”** to describe what you’re doing. For example:

- “I need to read this recipe (from this cookbook/that I found online) to know the steps I should take to make dinner.”
- “I’m reading these instructions to put together the highchair.”

- “Let’s read online how to change the oil in the car.”
- “I’ll read the directions and explain them to you so we can play this new game.”
- Looking something up on your phone? “I’m reading to find out the answer to our question!”
- Reading an article on your phone? “Right now I’m reading about \_\_\_\_\_.”

### **Choice builds engagement**

Kids read more and develop lifelong reading habits and strategies when they are allowed to choose their own books.

### **Open-ended questions**

Asking kids open-ended questions helps them develop critical thinking and communication skills. Open-ended questions are ones that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” so they encourage participants to use their vocabulary to respond.

### **Useful daily reading**

Reading labels, recipes, instructions, and other informational text helps kids develop necessary skills for being a self-sufficient adult. This kind of reading is just as important as reading books!

### **Writing that explains things is useful and important - and it’s writing!**

Writing that explains or tells us how to do something (called procedural writing) is very important in our day-to-day lives. Writing instructions for experiments or building projects helps beginning writers practice procedural writing and picking good words to make their message clear.

# Supporting Research

- **Library and Afterschool Program Models: Key Finding 1:** Libraries are experts at making reading fun.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 5:** Access, choice and time reading and discussing engaging text increase reading achievement.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 19:** Building and incorporating background knowledge aids in engagement.
- **Equity: Key Finding 5:** Incorporating principles of universal design can help libraries become more inclusive.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 11:** Teaching oracy is instrumental to better reading and writing.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 17:** Translanguaging acknowledges and utilizes the bilingual child’s complex language repertoire as a resource.
- **Best Practices in Reading and Writing: Key Finding 4:** Gradual release of responsibility is the most effective way to foster comprehension.
- **Library Program Models: Key Finding 2:** Just-right books: libraries are experts at reader’s advisory.
- **Library Program Models: Key Finding 10:** Encouraging joint media engagement between children, caregivers and educators increases literacy benefits of digital tools.
- **Family Outreach and Engagement: Key Finding 6:** Adults (especially parents/ caregivers) who model reading influence kids to read.

## Credits



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