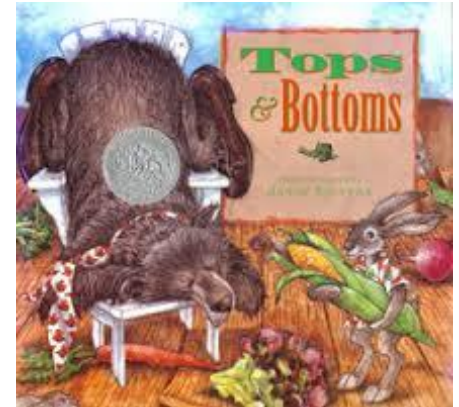


## August 2014 Book of the Month

### *Tops and Bottoms*

By: Janet Stevens

Hare solves his family's problems by tricking rich and lazy Bear in this funny, energetic version of an old slave story. With roots in American slave tales, *Tops & Bottoms* celebrates the trickster tradition of using one's wits to overcome hardship. "As usual, Stevens' animal characters, bold and colorful, are delightful. . . . It's all wonderful fun, and the book opens, fittingly, from top to bottom instead of from side to side, making it perfect for story-time sharing."--*Booklist*



This title has been selected as a Common Core Text Exemplar (Grades 2-3, Stories)

### Background Information

Some **root vegetables** that grow underground are beets, potatoes, radishes, carrots, onions and peanuts.

Some vegetable plants that grow on the **surface** are broccoli, tomatoes, cucumbers, beans, corn and peas.

This story is an excellent way to introduce students to root vegetables and compare vegetables grown under ground with vegetables grown above ground. In the story, Hare and his family are hungry. You see, Hare lost all his land in a bad bet with tortoise. Bear sleeps all day on the front porch of his house, presiding over his large front yard. Hare decides to strike up a business deal with Bear. Hare will farm the land and give Bear half the veggies. "Which half do you want, tops or bottoms?" asks Hare. "Tops!" Bear declares, before promptly falling back asleep. And he sleeps all through the work of planting and harvesting the crops. When the time comes to receive the rewards, Hare gives him the top half of the veggies--the tops of carrots, potatoes, etc. -- that is, the crummy half. And so it goes with other veggies as Bear changes his mind to want the bottoms, then the middles, always getting burned by clever Hare.

## **Activities:**

### **Matching**

Use cut out carrots/stems to match up synonyms, antonyms, math facts, vocabulary/definition, contractions, capital/lower case letters, etc. during center or independent work time. For example, when studying opposites, students choose the word “night” that is written on the orange root part of the carrot and find the matching green stem that displays the word “day.”

### **Where Plants Grow**

After reading and discussing the story, bring in real vegetables and have students explore, touch and feel them. Older students can research how they are grown and younger students can read or listen to read alouds about how they are grown. Make a chart with a heading labeled “Tops” and “Bottoms.” Have students list vegetables in the correct categories and draw or illustrate the plants.

### **Paper Plate Roots/Surface Vegetables**

“Craftivity” - Have students draw out pictures of root vegetables and surface vegetables. Cut out the pictures (or use pictures of vegetables). Pre- draw a line through the middle of BOTH paper plates. Have students cut along the line of only ONE plate. Label the cut plates as “Tops” and “Bottoms.” On the uncut plate, have student's color/paint the top half of the plate blue for the sky and the bottom half brown for the ground/soil. Have students glue the vegetables on the plate in the correct place. Attach the halves to the decorated plate with a brad fastener. Now the halves open to reveal top and bottom growing vegetables.

### **Sorting**

Have students cut out pictures of vegetables from magazines. Have them sort them into categories labeled as “Tops” or “Bottoms.”

### **Taste Test**

Have students taste raw carrots and cooked carrots. Collect data on the students’ favorite kind of carrots and create a bar graph.

### **Planting Carrots**

Have students plant carrots. Students can observe how they grow and record findings in a science data notebook. Students can also measure carrots when they pull them and compare lengths with other classmates' carrots.

### **Storytime Read-Aloud**

This story can be read aloud or students can listen as a familiar reread at the link below:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj7\\_IdQTZBc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qj7_IdQTZBc)

More activities and lesson plans on **Tops and Bottoms** can be found at:

<http://www.ncagintheclassroom.com/Curricula/Pre-K.aspx>

For an example of some of the ideas/suggestions listed please refer to the picture on the following page.

# Tops and Bottoms

