



arts**NOW**

# Creativity

## TASK CARDS

Grade 4

***A Chair for My Mother***  
by Vera B. Williams

4

FOURTH  
GRADE

REimagining and Accelerating  
Literacy through Arts Integration

2025-2026

# ABOUT

The **RE**imagining and **A**ccelerating **L**iteracy through **A**rts **I**ntegration (REALAI) grant supports the literacy achievement of 3,200 students and 170 teachers, media specialists, and literacy coaches across six schools in Georgia and South Carolina.

In addition to professional learning for educators, this project contributes significantly to school library collections through the purchase of developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant books.

This grant also includes parent events to provide families with access to books and other content about how to support their child's reading development.

These materials and the accompanying book, *A Chair for My Mother*, are made possible through the  
**United States Department of Education**  
and  
**ArtsNOW.**



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This story emphasizes the power of working together to reach a goal.

Let's create a sculpture using recycled or found objects, inspired by the beautiful, meaningful chair in the story.

**GRADE 4**  
**A CHAIR FOR MY MOTHER**

## **VISUAL ARTS**

### Supplies Needed

- A *Chair for My Mother* book
- Recycled items (cardboard, bottle caps, paper tubes, string, fabric scraps, etc.)
- Tape or glue
- Scissors
- Markers, crayons
- Paint (optional)

**I CAN design and create a sculpture using recycled materials.**

### Vocabulary

**Sculpture** - a three-dimensional work of art that can be made from a variety of materials

**Recycle** - to use something old in a new way

**Structure** - how something is built or held together

**Stability** - how strong and balanced something is

**Design** - a plan or idea for how something should look or work

### Instructions

- 1 Read the book, *A Chair for My Mother*. This about the characters in the story. How did they work together. What was their goal? Why was it important to get a new chair for her mother?
- 2 Think about what kind of chair would bring someone you love comfort and happiness? Design the chair and make a sketch.
- 3 Gather recycled or household materials that you might find around your house.
- 4 Use tape or glue to build a mini 3D chair (it can be realistic, imaginative, or even magical!).
- 5 Add details using color, texture, and symbols that reflect the person your chair was designed for.

### Extensions

- Add a tiny sculpture of the person the chair is for, sitting or standing next to it.
- Write a short story or poem about the chair and who it's for.
- Turn your chair into part of a mini room or diorama that tells more of the story.

# GRADE 4 A CHAIR FOR MY MOTHER

## THEATRE

Rosa works and saves to buy a chair for her mother!

**Let's create a news report about the dramatic moments in *A Chair For My Mother*.**

### Supplies Needed

- A *Chair for My Mother* book
- Paper and pencil
- A prop to use as a microphone

**I CAN  
use theatre  
strategies to retell  
a story in role.**

### Vocabulary

**Improvisation** - A moment in a play that is not rehearsed or "scripted", or acting without a script. For example: if an actor forgets a line, he/ she may improvise the line in the scene.

**Detail** - an individual feature, fact, or item; a small part of a larger whole

**Inference** - an educated guess based on given information

**Flashback** - a scene in a story set in an earlier time than the main part of the story

**Character** - a person in a story or play, or an animal or object that has human qualities

### Instructions

- 1 Read the story. The most dramatic part of *A Chair For My Mother* is the fire, which is related in a flashback. Reread the pages that comprise the flashback from "My mother and I were coming home . . ." to "We went to stay with my mother's sister Aunt Ida and Uncle Sandy".
- 2 Look for the details that are stated in the text (for example, "everything was turned to charcoal and ashes") and think about details that are not stated in the text but that you have to guess or infer (for example, where Grandma was when the fire started and how she made it out on her own or was rescued).
- 3 With a family member or friend, improvise a news report. One person is the reporter and the other is a character from the story. The reporter should interview the character to hear about what happened. The interviewer should be very interested and ask specific questions. The replies should be spoken through the emotion of the character and should include details.
- 4 Because you are improvising, you can add details that are not stated or shown in the book, but that you guess or infer.

### Extensions

- Draw a picture to go with your interview that shows an aspect of the story not shown in the book.
- Conduct a follow-up interview where the reporter comes back months later to interview the same character and hear how things have changed or developed since the fire.

**GRADE 4**  
**A CHAIR FOR MY MOTHER**

# DANCE

Each story has a beginning, middle, and end. In this story, the family works together to save money for a special chair.

**Let's choreograph a dance to show the parts of the story!**

## Supplies Needed

- A *Chair for My Mother* book
- Pencil or pen
- Paper

**I CAN**  
retell a story by  
creating a three-step  
movement sequence  
that summarizes the  
beginning, middle,  
and end.

## Vocabulary

**Sequence** – a series of movements performed in a specific order

**Problem/Solution** – the challenge a character faces and how they solve it

**Level** – one of the aspects of movement (there are three basic levels in dance: high, middle, and low)

**Locomotor Movement** - a movement that travels through space (walking, skipping)

**Non-locomotor Movement** - a movement that does not travel through space (bending, swinging arms)

**Summarize** – To briefly tell the most important parts of a story in your own words.

## Instructions

- 1 Read *A Chair for My Mother*. As you read, think about the story's structure: What happens at the beginning? What happens in the middle? How does the story end?
- 2 Write three short sentences, one for each part of the story, to summarize:
  - a. What happened at the beginning?
  - b. What happened in the middle?
  - c. What happened at the end?
- 3 Then, create a three-step movement sequence to match each part of your summary. For each movement, choose a **level** that matches the feeling or event.
- 4 Be sure you have locomotor and non-locomotor movements in your sequence. Practice your sequence in order to retell the story with both your words and your body.

## Extensions

- Add an opening and closing pose to your movement sequence to show how one character felt at the start and how they felt at the end.
- Reflect: How did the movement change from beginning to end, just like the character?

In this book, Rosa drops coins in a glass jar to save for a new chair.

**GRADE 4**  
**A CHAIR FOR MY MOTHER**

**Let's drop coins to create music  
and bring our story to life!**

# MUSIC

## Supplies Needed

- *A Chair for My Mother* book
- Glass jar
- Coins (paper clips, pebbles, or other small objects will work, too)
- Writing materials
- Paper

**I CAN  
use music to  
make a book  
come alive!**

## Vocabulary

**Dynamics** - loud and soft sounds; volume

**Rhythm** - long and short sounds and silences

**Beat** - the consistent pulse or "heartbeat" of music

**Tempo** - the speed of the beat

**Introduction:** a short section at the beginning that sets the mood and generates interest

**Coda:** a short section at the end after the main part is finished

**Character** - a person in a story or play, or an animal or object that has human qualities

**Central message** - the big idea or lesson of the story

## Instructions

- 1 Read the book. Discuss the events in the book. Who are the characters? What is the setting? What is the main idea or central message of the book?
- 2 Write a short sentence about what we can learn from the story.
- 3 Pat a steady beat. Practice saying your sentence in a rhythm while patting the beat. You may say more than one word or syllable on a beat—this creates an interesting rhythm.
- 4 Drop coins in a jar one by one. Describe the sound. How do the dynamics change depending on where you drop the coins from (close to the rim, higher in the air)? How does the sound change as the jar fills with coins (higher, lower, same)?
- 5 Read the story, putting coins in the jar each time the characters do. Decide
  - Will the dropping coins have a steady beat? Will they have a rhythm? Will they be dropped randomly (no steady beat)?
  - How many coins will go in the jar each time?
  - Will the dynamics be loud or quiet or in between?
  - Will the coins be dropped individually or in groups?
- 6 Your jar needs to be filled by the end of the story! At the end of the story, say your rhythmic sentence. Decide how many times you'll say your sentence and what the tempo and dynamics will be.

## Extensions

- Say the book title rhythmically over four beats. Read the title rhythmically as an introduction to the book; read the sentence you wrote at the end as a coda.
- Consider others ways to create an introduction and coda.



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