







What do you know about chickens?

- What sounds do chickens make?
- What do chickens eat?
- Why do farmers raise chickens?
- What does a chicken look like?
- Have you ever seen a real chicken? If so, where?

Old MacDonald is going to tell you all about chickens. Listen to find out more about the main topic, or main idea, of today's lesson: chickens.



Old MacDonald here again. This time I want to tell you about chickens. I have a few chickens on my farm, but some farmers have lots of chickens. Chickens are birds, but they do not really fly.



Like any bird, chickens have feathers, feet, beaks, and wings, but chickens cannot fly. They can flap their wings, and sometimes a chicken can get a few feet off the ground or even to the top of a shed roof. But chicken bodies are not suited for flying.



What might happen if chickens could fly? Could farmers just let them walk around?



Some farmers let their chickens out in the yard to peck around for insects, seeds, and other food on the ground. Peck means to use a beak to get food. As long as there is food to be found, chickens tend to stay close to home, so there is little need to worry about them running away.



Generally, chickens need help from the farmer to get all the food they need. The farmer feeds them special pellets, called chicken feed, or he can feed them dried corn, wheat, or oats. Feed means to give food to, but feed is also the food that animals eat.



At night--and all the time on some farms--chickens live in the chicken coop. A chicken coop is not a fancy shelter. It usually consists of a small building where the chickens make their nests and where they roost, or sleep at night.



The chicken coop also has a fenced in dirt yard. The main reason for having a fence is to keep other animals out. Chickens are tasty and-because they can't fly-they would be easy prey for other animals, including owls, foxes raccoons weasels and foxes, raccoons, weasels, and skunks.



These animals are nocturnal predators, meaning they are animals that hunt at night, so every farmer needs to make sure that the chickens are all safely locked up in the coop every night before he or she goes to bed.



Female chickens are called hens. Hens lay eggs, which many people like to eat.
On some farms, the farmer collects (or takes) the eggs from the chickens' nests each morning and evening. On other farms the hens lay their eggs in cages with sloping bottoms so the eggs roll out onto a conveyor belt that collects them. The farmer and his family eat the eggs, or they sell them to other people.





Eggs have hard shells. If you crack the shell you can break open the egg and release the yolk and white. Egg yolk is yellow and egg white is actually clear, though it turns white when you cook it.



Some people like to eat fried or scrambled or boiled eggs for breakfast. Eggs are also used to make other foods, including cakes, cookies and other baked goods.



This hen laid several eggs, and now she is sitting on her eggs. If the farmer does not collect the eggs, the hen will keep sitting on them to keep them warm and protected. This is called nesting.



After the hen sits on the eggs for about twenty-one days, something amazing will happen. A chick will be born, and it will use its beak to crack open the shell from the inside! For twenty-one days, the chick has gradually grown inside the egg.



All this time it has been using the egg yolk and white as its food. Within a few hours the chick will be fluffy and yellow. On some farms the eggs are hatched in incubators, machines that warm the eggs just like a mother hen.





Hens are good mothers. They naturally know to sit on eggs to keep them warm and how to raise baby chicks. They, will even sit on other hens' (or even other birds') eggs! Unlike cows and pigs, chickens do not produce milk to feed their young.



After the chicks hatch, or come out of their eggs, they quickly learn to scratch and peck. Soon, these chicks will be ready to peck the ground to find food for themselves.



Male chickens are called roosters. The farmer usually only keeps one rooster in the chicken coop. Roosters do not lay eggs. Like the hens you saw earlier, this rooster has a red comb on top of his head.





If you compare this rooster to the hens, you will also notice that he has a larger wattle. The wattle is the flap of bare skin that hangs down on a bird's throat. Roosters have larger wattles than hens.



Roosters are famous for perching on fences and even on rooftops--if they can flap or scamper to the top of the barn--and crowing cock-adoodle-do!" Roosters are alarm clocks for farmers because they often crow as soon as the sun starts to rise.



And getting up early is just fine for farmers, because they know that "the early bird gets the worm." Roosters continue crowing from time to time throughout the day, but they usually do not go cock-adoodle-do" at night.



Of course, farmers don't raise chickens just for their eggs.

Many people like to eat chicken. One of my favorites is fried chicken, but some folks like to eat roasted chicken or barbecued chicken.



A popular food many kids like to order when the go out to eat is called chicken fingers. Of course, chickens do not really have fingers! Chicken fingers are simply strips of cooked chicken meat that you eat with your fingers.



Well, that's about everything I can tell you about chickens, and mine are probably getting hungry right about now, so I better go throw a few scoops of feed into the coop.

Comprehension Questions:

What is the main topic, or main idea, of today's lesson?

Comprehension Questions:

Literal

What do you see in this picture? What sound do they make?



Comprehension Questions:

How do chickens get the food that they need?



Comprehension Questions:

Literal

How do chicks begin their life?



Comprehension Questions:

Literal

Once the chicks have hatched, how do they get the food that they need?



Comprehension Questions:

Why do many chickens spend time in a chicken coop?



Comprehension Questions:

How can you tell the difference between a hen and a rooster?



Comprehension Questions:

How are chickens like other birds that you might see outside? How are they different?



Comprehension Questions:

Evaluative

Why do farmers raise chickens? Do you like to eat eggs and or chicken meat?



# Think. Pair. Share.

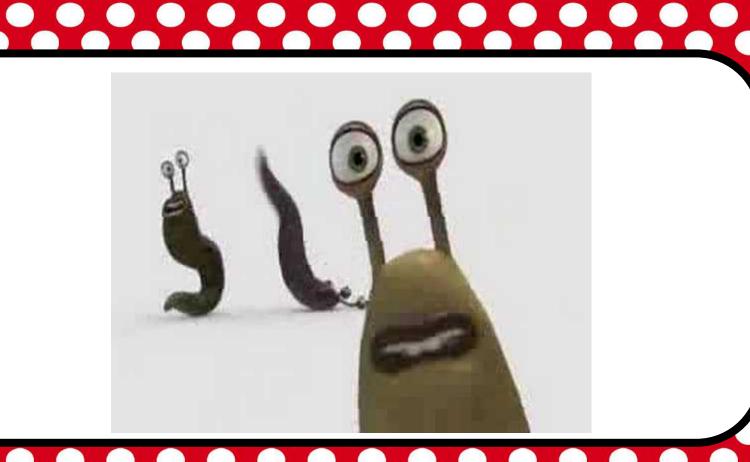


T<sub>Evaluative</sub>:





What is the most interesting fact that you learned about chickens?





Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

In the read aloud you heard, "On some farms, the farmer collects the eggs from the chickens' nests each morning and evening."

Say the word **collects** with me. Whisper collects to the ceiling. Whisper collects to the floor. Clap out the word.

If a person **collects** things, he or she brings them together and saves them.

My grandfather collects old coins.

Is there something that you collect, or do you know someone who collects things? Try to use the word collects when you tell about it.

"My sister collects stuffed animals."

What's the word we've been talking about?

I am going to describe some situations that are examples of a person collecting things. For each example, I want you to tell me what is being collected and by whom. Try to answer in complete sentences.

Begin your responses with "\_\_\_\_\_\_ collects \_\_\_\_\_\_."

Steve picks up lots of shells at the beach and puts them in his pail.

Gina has friends and family send her postcards, which she keeps in a box.

Sue keeps all her favorite rocks that she has found in a pail.

Juan has more than fifty baseball trading cards in his desk.



The squirrel hides dozens of acorns to eat during the winter.

