



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Everything you need, one page per day.

Week 17 • Weather

11–15 January 2027 • 13 minutes a day • ages 2.5–6, English learners

大寒 (Major Cold) arrives on 20 January, next week — the coldest days of the year

WEEK OVERVIEW



Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week

Every morning we look out of the window and **say** what the sky is doing. The class weather chart goes up on Monday and one child hangs today's card before the circle starts. Five mornings, five looks out of the window, five real words for a real sky — never teach the weather from a picture while the actual weather is on the other side of the glass.

FIVE WORDS THEY'LL OWN BY FRIDAY

sunny rainy windy cloudy snowy

Littles (2.5–3) — one word + a gesture is a win: “Sun!” (a big circle drawn with both arms), “Rain!” (fingers pattering down), “Wind!” (whoooooosh — sway from side to side).

Bigs (4–6) — sentence frames: “How is the weather today?” · “It is sunny today.” · “I need my umbrella.”

THE 13-MINUTE FLOW, EVERY DAY

- 2 MIN** Magic Box hook — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek, the day's real object.
- 4 MIN** Teach — the day's word with the real thing in your hands. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 MIN** Song — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 MIN** Game — one named game, tied to the day's word.
- 1 MIN** Close — whisper → normal → SHOUT.

IN THE MAGIC BOX, DAY BY DAY

Mon a pair of sunglasses — everyone tries them on · **Tue** an umbrella and a water spray bottle, a little real rain · **Wed** a paper pinwheel and a fan · **Thu** cotton-wool clouds stuck on grey card · **Fri** everything from the week, plus loose cotton wool for snow and the filled-in weather chart.

THE WEEK'S CLOSE

Everyone: “Sunny... rainy... windy... cloudy... SNOWY! LOOK OUTSIDE!” (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · big round arms · flutter fingers down · both arms thrown at the window on the shout*)

THEME SHELF · FOUR TRAYS

- 1** • The weather chart — five symbol cards and a day strip; one child hangs today's card every morning. *Control: the window — go and look.* (From Monday, and it never comes down.)
- 2** • Pinwheel and blowing tray — a pinwheel, feathers, tiny paper scraps. *Control: it spins, or it doesn't.* (From Wednesday.)
- 3** • Weather 3-part cards — sunny · rainy · windy · cloudy · snowy, Chinese and English, plus the action cards. *Control: the whole control cards.*
- 4** • Dress for the weather — the two signs and the 12 sorting cards: sunhat and sunglasses under the sun, boots and umbrella under the rain. *Control: a yellow or a blue dot on the back of every card, added by the class.*

CHINESE ANGLE

One 汉字 card a day under the chart: 晴 · 雨 · 风 · 云 · 雪, read as a row on Friday. 今天是晴天 (Mon) · 下雨了 · 雨伞, and the little strokes inside 雨 falling like the rain (Tue) · 刮风了 · 冷不冷? with the fan (Wed) · 晴天 · 多云 · 下雨 chorused in order (Thu) · 大寒 on the 20th: 大寒到, 天最冷. (Fri)

FRIDAY'S DARK PHONICS SOUND

f — top teeth on the bottom lip and a long, quiet blow, like a little fan: fan, fox, fog, fly. “*Funny fox in my fan!*” It is a weather sound too — fog is the one sky we did not get this week, so name it on the next grey Beijing morning. You can hold it as long as your breath lasts: fffffff.

MONDAY · DAY 1

Sunny Day

Today's words: **sunny**

Grab: a pair of **sunglasses** in the Magic Box (grown-up ones, the bigger and sillier the better); the blank **class weather chart** and its five symbol cards, hung where the smallest child can reach it; the 晴 card.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box is light and something inside it clicks. Hold it up. Whole class chants:

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it — one small clack. Sniff — nothing at all. Peek in for a long time, then say, very puzzled, "There are two little windows in here."

Teacher: (*put the sunglasses on, slowly, and look right round the circle at every single child through them*) "Now... I can only see you when the sun is out."

The sunglasses go round the circle and every child tries them on. Big circle drawn with both arms: **"Sun!"**

4 MIN TEACH · SUNNY

Everybody stands. Say it twice — the second time they do it with you:

The **sun** is up, (*both arms draw a big circle overhead*)
The sky is blue, (*one flat hand sweeps across in front of you*)
Sunglasses **ON** — (*mime putting them on with both hands*)
I can see **YOU!** (*point at one child after another, all the way round*)

Then to the window, the whole class, and **look**. Is it sunny? One child hangs today's symbol card on the chart while everybody watches. This is the moment the week is built on: the sky, the word, the card, in that order.

Littles draw the sun circle and say **"Sun!"** Bigs owe you the answer: **"It is sunny today."** Ask it properly first — **"How is the weather today?"**

Teacher fails: put the sunglasses on the **back** of your head, face the circle and complain that it has gone very dark. Hold it. Wait for them to march you round.

Chinese moment: lay the 晴 card under the chart and say 今天是晴天 once. One 汉字 a day joins the row all week — 晴 · 雨 · 风 · 云 · 雪.

3 MIN GAME · WEATHER CHARADES

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" You go first, big and silly: shade your eyes, fan yourself, walk very slowly like a hot afternoon.

Teacher: "What am I? What's the weather?" (*no words, only the acting — let it run long enough to be funny*)

Then one child at a time acts and the class guesses. Littles act with you, holding your hand, and the class still guesses. Bigs answer in the frame: **"It is sunny!"**

Only two answers are possible today — sunny or rainy — and that is deliberate. Guessing succeeds all week because the choice grows by exactly one word a day.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing at the window. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Sunny... rainy... windy... cloudy... SNOWY! LOOK OUTSIDE!" (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · big round arms · flutter fingers down · both arms thrown at the window on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Sun Up, Sun Down* (Gail Gibbons) — or simply lie on the floor in the one patch of sunlight on the carpet and be warm together, saying nothing.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Monday's verse → chorus, standing at the window.

"Sunny, sunny, the sun is out, / sunglasses on — run about!" (*sun circle twice; mime the glasses, then run on the spot*)

TUESDAY · DAY 2

Rainy Day

Today's words: **rainy** (*sunny comes back every day*)

Grab: an **umbrella** in the Magic Box (or beside it — it will not fit) and a **water spray bottle**, filled and set to a fine mist; a towel; the 雨 card; the weather chart.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Today the box will not shut properly and a long handle is sticking out. Chant anyway:

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Before you lift it out, hold up the spray bottle and give **one** small pssst over your own hand. Then over your face. Look astonished.

Teacher: “Hands out... here comes the **rain.**” (*one tiny mist over each child’s open palms, going right round the circle*)

Fingers pattering down: **“Rain!”** Then out comes the umbrella and it goes **up.**

4 MIN TEACH · RAINY

Everybody stands. Twice, the second time with you:

Drip, drop, drip, (*fingers pattering down from high to low*)

The rain comes **down**, (*both hands falling all the way to the floor*)

Up goes my umbrella — (*push both hands up over your head*)

All around the town! (*turn slowly right round on the spot*)

Now the real thing: open the umbrella, hold it over three children and spray the rain onto it so they can **hear** it landing above their heads and stay dry underneath. Everyone gets a turn to listen.

Littles patter their fingers and say **“Rain!”** Bigs take the frame: **“It is rainy today.” “I need my umbrella.”**

Teacher fails: hold the umbrella **upside down** like a bucket and admire how much rain you are catching. Get wetter and wetter. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 雨 card joins 晴 under the chart — 下雨了 · 雨伞. Point at the two characters and let them see the little strokes in 雨 falling like the rain itself.

3 MIN GAME · RUN IN THE RAIN

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” You stand in the middle holding the open umbrella. Music plays: everybody walks about in the rain. Music stops:

Teacher: “It’s RAINING! Under the umbrella!” (*everybody squeezes in underneath — then count the heads out loud together*)

Play it four or five times. Walking feet only, and the last round is a slow-motion round so nobody gets flattened.

Littles who will not leave your leg can hold the umbrella handle with you and be the shelter instead of running for it. Same game, same words, no crying.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing at the window, umbrella up. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Sunny... rainy... windy... cloudy... SNOWY! LOOK OUTSIDE!” (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · big round arms · flutter fingers down · both arms thrown at the window on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Rain Came Down* (David Shannon) — the rain falls, everyone squabbles, the sun comes out and everybody is friends again.

3 MIN · Today’s song moment — chorus → Tuesday’s verse → chorus, and on “rainy” the fingers patter *hard*.

“Rainy, rainy, drip-drop-drip, / up goes my umbrella — don’t you slip!” (*fingers pattering down; push up with both hands, then wobble and catch yourself*)

WEDNESDAY · DAY 3

Windy Day

Today's words: **windy** (*sunny · rainy come back*)

Grab: a paper **pinwheel** and a **fan** in the Magic Box; a feather and a few tiny scraps of tissue paper; the 风 card; the weather chart.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box makes no sound at all today. Chant, shake — nothing. Sniff — nothing.

Everyone: “What’s in the box? What’s in the box?”

Open the lid a crack and **blow** into it. Something inside starts to whirr. Open it properly and lift out the spinning pinwheel.

Teacher: “I can’t see it... but I can see what it **does**.” (*hold the pinwheel out and blow it round for one long breath*)

Swaying from side to side, whoooooosh: **“Wind!”**

4 MIN TEACH · WINDY

Everybody stands. Twice, the second time with you:

Whoosh goes the wind, (*sway from side to side, arms loose above your head*)

It blows my hair, (*both hands through your hair, messing it up*)

It blows my **hat** — (*grab your head, look up in alarm*)

Up in the **AIR!** (*both hands thrown straight up*)

Then the real work. Wind is air, and air is invisible — so we watch what it moves. The feather across the mat. The tissue scraps off your palm. The pinwheel, close up and far away. Every child blows something and every child sees it move.

Littles sway and say **“Wind!”** Bigs take the frame: **“It is windy today.” “The wind blows my hat!”**

Teacher fails: stand a metre back from the pinwheel and blow at it very hard indeed. Nothing happens. Blow harder. Get cross with the pinwheel. Wait for somebody to come and move you closer.

Chinese moment: the 风 card joins the row — 刮风了. Fan one child with the fan and ask them 冷不冷? — wind on the skin is the same lesson in either language.

3 MIN GAME · BLOW THE PINWHEEL

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Sitting in the circle, the pinwheel is passed from child to child. Whose can keep spinning the longest?

Teacher: “Big breath in through your **nose**... and blow slowly out through your **mouth**.” (*count the spins out loud together — one, two, three, four...*)

Littles hold it while you blow and count with their fingers up. Bigs count their own spins and report: **“I blew six!”**

A long slow breath spins it further than a short hard puff, and they discover that themselves in about four turns. Do not tell them — just let the counting say it.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing at the window, swaying. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: “Sunny... rainy... windy... cloudy... SNOWY! LOOK OUTSIDE!” (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · big round arms · flutter fingers down · both arms thrown at the window on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Wind Blew* (Pat Hutchins) — the wind takes an umbrella, a balloon, a hat, a kite, and gives every one of them to the wrong person.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Wednesday's verse → chorus, and on “windy” everybody nearly falls over.

“Windy, windy, whoosh-whoosh-whoosh, / it blows my hat — and shakes the bush!” (*three big sways; grab your head, then shake both hands like leaves*)

THURSDAY · DAY 4

Cloudy Day

Today's words: **cloudy** (*sunny · rainy · windy come back*)

Grab: cotton-wool clouds stuck on grey card in the Magic Box, plus a spare bag of loose cotton wool; a rug or coats if you can get outside; the 云 card; the weather chart.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box weighs nothing at all today. Let one child hold it and be surprised. Chant:

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Shake it — a soft nothing. Lift out the grey card with its cotton-wool clouds and hold it high above everybody's heads, so they have to look **up** at it.

Teacher: "Soft... grey and white... and it lives **up there**." (*let every child reach up and touch one cloud*)

Both arms round in a big fat shape: **"Cloud!"**

4 MIN TEACH · CLOUDY

Everybody stands. Twice, the second time with you:

Big fat clouds, (*both arms make a huge round shape*)

Grey and white, (*one hand, then the other, sweeping across the sky*)

They cover up the **sun** — (*one hand slides across in front of the other*)

and hide the **light!** (*both hands over your eyes, then peep through your fingers*)

Then the loose cotton wool. Pull a piece thin and wispy; roll a piece thick and lumpy. Both are clouds. Hold them up against the window and compare them with the real ones. Count the real clouds together — none, a few, or a sky so full you cannot count at all, which is also an answer.

Littles make the round arms and say **"Cloud!"** Bigs take the frame: **"It is cloudy today." "I can see three clouds."**

Teacher fails: reach right out of the window and try to **catch** a cloud in your two hands. Look at your empty hands. Try again, higher. Wait.

Chinese moment: the 云 card joins the row — 多云. Say 晴天 · 多云 · 下雨 in order, pointing at the three cards, and let them chorus it back.

3 MIN GAME · CLOUD WATCHING

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" Coats on and outside if you possibly can — flat on our backs on the ground, looking straight up. If you cannot get out, everybody lies on the mat with their heads at the window.

Teacher: (*very quietly*) "Find one cloud... just one... and tell me what it looks like."

Go round one at a time and everybody gets to say their cloud. Littles point and say one word — **"Dog!"** Bigs give it a sentence: **"That cloud looks like a big dog."**

This is the quietest three minutes of the year and it is worth protecting. No corrections, no "are you sure?" — a cloud looks like whatever the child says it looks like.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing at the window, big round cloud arms. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Sunny... rainy... windy... cloudy... SNOWY! LOOK OUTSIDE!" (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · big round arms · flutter fingers down · both arms thrown at the window on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *Little Cloud* (Eric Carle) — one cloud turns into a sheep, an aeroplane, a hat, and then rains on everybody.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — chorus → Thursday's verse → chorus, slower, drifting.

"Cloudy, cloudy, grey and white, / big fat clouds — what a sight!" (*round arms, sweep both hands across; arms wide, then hand shading the eyes*)

FRIDAY · DAY 5

Snowy + The Weather Reporter

Today's words: **snowy** (and all five come back for the report)

Grab: everything from the week back in the Magic Box — sunglasses, umbrella, spray bottle, pinwheel, fan, cotton-wool clouds — plus a handful of loose cotton wool for snow; the **class weather chart** with all five days now filled in; the 雪 card; the awards from print pack page 17.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

The box is full and heavy and everything rattles. Chant it big:

Everyone: "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Out comes one prop at a time, fast, and the class shouts the word before you can say it — sunglasses, umbrella, pinwheel, cloud. Then, last, hold up a handful of cotton wool and let it fall through your fingers over somebody's head.

Teacher: "Cold... white... and it falls very, very **slowly**." (*everybody flutters their fingers down from as high as they can reach*)

Fluttering fingers falling: **"Snow!"**

4 MIN TEACH · SNOWY, AND THE WHOLE WEEK

Everybody stands. The last new rhyme of the week, twice:

Snowy, snowy, white and cold, (*flutter fingers down, then hug yourself and shiver*)

It falls so **slow...** (*one hand drifting down, very slowly indeed*)

and the whole world's **gold!** (*no — wait for them to correct you*)

Teacher fails — this is the one: the world is **white**, not gold, and they will tell you so before the line is finished. Look amazed. Do it again wrong. Let them fix it twice.

Then the review. Hold up each prop and the class gives the word and the gesture: sunglasses → **"Sunny!"** umbrella → **"Rainy!"** pinwheel → **"Windy!"** cloud → **"Cloudy!"** cotton wool → **"Snowy!"** Bigs answer the real question every time: **"How is the weather today?" "It is snowy today."**

Chinese moment: the 雪 card completes the row — 下雪了. Read all five together, pointing: 晴 · 雨 · 风 · 云 · 雪. Then 大寒 — the coldest days of the whole year arrive on the 20th, next week: 大寒到, 天最冷。

3 MIN GAME · LITTLE WEATHER REPORTER

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" The chart is on the wall with all five days filled in. Each child in turn comes up, takes the pointer, points at one day and reports it to the class like the television.

Teacher: "And now... the weather. Over to you!" (*hand over the pointer and step right back — the reporter runs the room*)

Littles point at a card and say the one word: **"Sunny!"** Bigs give the whole report: **"On Monday it was sunny." "Today it is snowy."** Everybody claps every reporter.

Give out the **"You are a star" awards** (page 17) here, one per child, as they finish their report. Then the sheets and the awards go home together in the bag.

1 MIN CLOSE

Standing at the window, the whole week's props held up. Whisper → normal → shout:

Everyone: "Sunny... rainy... windy... cloudy... SNOWY! LOOK OUTSIDE!" (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · big round arms · flutter fingers down · both arms thrown at the window on the shout*)

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Snowy Day* (Ezra Jack Keats) — one small boy, one morning of snow, and nothing else happens at all. It is perfect.

3 MIN · Today's song moment — THE WHOLE SONG. Chorus, then all five verses in order, then the chorus once more, as loud as it will go. **This run-through is the week's review.**

"Sun and rain and wind and snow, / what's the weather? — Now I know!" (*one action for each; shrug with both palms up, then point proudly at the chart*)

SONGBOOK

★ “How's the Weather?”

C (0003) F (2010) G7 (0212) · Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“how's the — weath-er”)

Three chords, and **no Am anywhere** — the same three shapes as the Christmas song, so your fingers already know it. C is one finger, F is two, G7 is three. Brisk and cheerful, like somebody stepping outside to check the sky. Chant it once without the uke so they get the actions first; add the chords tomorrow.

CHORUS — EVERY SINGLE DAY

C How's the weather? How's the F weather? C (*hand shading your eyes, looking about*)

F Look out C side and G7 tell me now! C (*point at the window*)

C Sunny, rainy, F windy, C snowy, (*sun circle · fingers patter · sway · flutter fingers down*)

F Cloudy C too — and G7 that is C how! (*both arms round like a big fat cloud*)

MONDAY · SUNNY

C Sunny, sunny, the sun is out,

G7 Sunglasses on — C run about!

TUESDAY · RAINY

C Rainy, rainy, drip-drop-drip,

G7 Up goes my umbrella — C don't you slip!

WEDNESDAY · WINDY

C Windy, windy, whoosh-whoosh-whoosh,

G7 It blows my hat — C and shakes the bush!

THURSDAY · CLOUDY

C Cloudy, cloudy, grey and white,

G7 Big fat clouds — C what a sight!

FRIDAY · WEATHER REPORT

C Sun and rain and wind and snow,

G7 What's the weather? — C Now I know!

Each day: chorus → today's verse → chorus, always standing at the window. Friday: sing the whole thing top to bottom in front of the filled-in weather chart — that run-through is the review of the week. If your fingers get stuck, put the uke down, give one child the pinwheel to spin and do the finger-play instead; the actions carry the meaning either way.