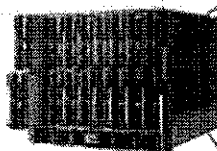




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Fight Winter Blues With a January Beach Party



One way we brighten the winter months in my classroom is by having a tropical island party/learning unit. We begin by reading *Moe the Dog in Tropical Paradise*, by Diane Stanley (Putnam, 1987), then use Moe's story as inspiration to create our very own tropical island. My students research the flora and fauna of tropical islands and make paper replicas. Each child draws a species of tropical fish for an ocean-blue mural. We prepare a "beach," complete with seashells for kids to identify, and even have a pool area, with a plastic pool and lawn chairs to serve as a reading center. On the big day, everyone dons their summer clothes and sunglasses. Children read and do crossword puzzles by the pool, sort seashells, and enjoy tropical fruit punch with tiny umbrellas in the cups. Like Moe, we are able to forget the snow or a while.

By Donette Minsky, Bath Elementary, Bath, MI