

Muddy, brown water. A couple of wiffle balls. An old, dirty snowman toy. A plastic Dora the Explora figure that has been buried in the earth for over a year. Add to these things a stinky sock and a few sticks, and you have the perfect recipe for 'sock soup'. And of course you have to mix it all together in a wheel barrow. That is what took place today in my vegetable garden. I was peacefully planting some seeds, and making sure that everything was just right, when I heard some little monkeys come running in my direction. "Uh-oh," I thought to myself, "here comes trouble." Robert and Domini were wanting to get involved in the garden, get their hands dirty, do no work at all, and make a huge mess. You know, like kids normally do. So, I gave them a few rules to follow, and then let them get on with their project. I think they were pretending to be scientists. They stirred the chemicals carefully, and immersed their patient, the snowman, in the mix. It was very serious play time. This experiment would change history. As I watched them, I was reminded about a similar occasion, when a little boy (my brother) and a very little girl (myself) were also mixing a very important cocktail. We were at my grandparents house in the Summer. They had chickens, and some how my brother and I had got hold of the corn feed. We mixed it with water in a very large watering can. And we invented a chant, "Corn and water, water and corn. Corn and water, water and corn." We were so happy, mixing and chanting, chanting and mixing. We could have continued for hours. However, my very traditional, serious, and a little impatient grandfather was trying to sleep on a lawn chair nearby. He tossed and turned, and tried to ignore us. But then, suddenly, he just couldn't take it anymore. He sat upright, and barked like a bull dog, "For goodness sake, would you be quiet!" Surprised, and a little amused at how cross and red-faced he was, we fell silent for a few minutes. But then we started whispering our chant, instead. How kids love to mess about. It's great. I let my children get on with it, and use their imaginations, until it gets too messy. Then we call it a day.

### **Grammar notes.**

Related vocabulary: a wiffle ball, to call it a day, a watering can, red-faced.

1. A wiffle ball has lots of holes in it, and makes a sort of whistle when you hit it with a bat.
2. I'm tired. We've been digging all day. Let's call it a day.
3. The water flows gently from the watering can and doesn't break the tender flowers.
4. The teacher was so cross that we was red-faced.