

Bloom's Taxonomy Questions for *Owl Moon* by Jane Yolen

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The children's book *Owl Moon* was written by Jane Yolen and illustrated by John Schoenherr. It was published by Philomel Books, a division of the Putnam Publishing Group, New York, NY (1987).

Summary: A little girl and her father walk through the woods late one winter night, hoping to see an owl. They step quietly and patiently through the snowy cold. Occasionally, the father sends out an owl call. Eventually, they hear a response and are gratified to see a great horned owl land on a nearby branch. They head for home, still keeping quiet in the owl's territory.

QUESTIONS FROM DIFFERENT LEVELS OF BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

KNOWLEDGE

Make the sound of the owl call used by the girl's father

- Students must recall the owl call. They must simply recognize the call and lift it directly from the text; no interpretation is required.

COMPREHENSION

What does the author mean when she says that the dark shadows "stained the white snow"?

- Students must demonstrate that they understand this metaphor. They cannot just restate the quote. They must unpack its meaning by paraphrasing it in more literal language in the context of a winter walk. Someone might argue that this question is an application question, but paraphrasing doesn't necessarily mean applying the metaphor to a new situation. Here, paraphrasing just means describing and clarifying.

APPLICATION

How would this story be different if the characters were looking for squirrels?

- To answer this question, students must understand two things: 1) information learned from the story (how to look for owls), and 2) information about a *new situation* (something about squirrels). If the students can recognize useful information from #1 and transfer it to #2, they are doing more than comprehending. But they are not yet analyzing because they can answer the question without too much generalizing or inferring.

ANALYSIS

What things might ruin an owling trip?

- Students must break down the story's hints and implicit information to infer what makes a successful owling trip. Then they must deduce cause and effect. Answering this question requires insight, but not the kind of original, creative thinking that is needed to address a synthesis question.

SYNTHESIS

Rewrite this story from the owl's point of view.

- Students must apply a fresh perspective to reconstruct the author's ideas into an original story. In a way, this question *combines* the two previous levels: application and analysis. This task does not require evaluation though, since the students do not need to measure their creation against a standard, such as their opinions or personal values.

EVALUATION

Is owl-ing a good parent-child activity? Why or why not?

- In order to answer this question, students must take a stand and defend their position. They are creating something new (i.e., an individual critique)—just as they would with a synthesis question— but in this highest cognitive level, they must draw on personal values as well as mastery of the story to justify their claims.