

Activities for Trade Books

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Title of book: How I Learned Geography

Author's name: Uri Shulevitz

Copyright year: 2008

Genre: Multicultural

Number of pages: 29

Synopsis of Story: A boy and his parents flee Poland during the Warsaw blitz of 1939. They live in utter poverty in Kazakhstan. One day, the father goes to market and brings home a world map instead of food. At first, the mother and boy are furious. As he spends hours studying the world map, however, the boy comes to appreciate his father's judgment. The boy escapes the misery of refugee life as he imagines himself being transported to locations throughout the world.

Activity: This is my own idea.

Write a set of alliterative phrases. (More advanced students: write a rhyme). Review the rhyme that the boy made from the unfamiliar-sounding names on the map. As a class, practice creating something similar using familiar place names. Put students in groups of three. Provide copies of a world map (or part of a world map), preferably one without *too* much detail. Have them circle some places on the map that begin with the same sound. Ask students to write several alliterative phrases using some of the place names they circled. Have groups present their phrases to one another: two people read the phrases, and the other person points to the location on the map as the place name is read.

State standard: 2.3.4 Identify the use of rhythm, rhyme, and alliteration (using words with repeating consonant sounds) in poetry or fiction.

Title of book: Joseph Had a Little Overcoat

Author's name: Simms Taback

Copyright year: 1999

Genre: Multicultural

Number of pages: 34

Synopsis of Story: A man named Joseph decides to turn his old, worn overcoat into a jacket. Then the jacket gets holes in it, and it seems too old to wear. Instead of discarding the jacket, Joseph cuts it down to a vest, then a scarf, then a necktie, then a handkerchief, and finally a button. He loses the button and writes this book to tell this story of making something out of nothing.

Activity: This activity was adapted from a lesson plan for this book at

<http://pbskids.org/lions/cornerstones/pdf/josephguide.pdf> .

Retell events in order using (wearing) clothing props. After reading the story as a class, distribute overcoats, jackets, vests, scarves, neckties, handkerchiefs, and buttons with suspenders. Help students understand each article of clothing. Ask each person to put on his/her assigned clothing item. Have students arrange themselves in the order that each article appeared in the story. Students may refer back to the story if necessary. To reinforce sequence of events, discuss as a class why certain items *must* appear earlier in the story than other items. Play a recording of the song at the back of the book. As each item is mentioned, have the students wearing that item get up and sing along and dance or move around in turn. The last item in line should be the book itself to reinforce the idea that stories can grow out of our experiences.

State Standard: 1.7.7 Retell stories using basic story grammar and relating the sequence of story events by answering *who, what, when, where, why, and how* questions.

Title of book: Yoko
Author's name: Rosemary Wells
Copyright year: 1998
Genre: Multicultural
Number of pages: 30

Synopsis of Story: Yoko's mother packs some tasty sushi in Yoko's lunch cooler. Yoko enjoys her day at school until her classmates tease her for eating food that is foreign to them. The teacher plans an international food day to encourage the students to appreciate foods from a variety of cultures. Unfortunately, everyone ignores Yoko's sushi, except Timothy. Yoko and Timothy become friends as they discover that they like each other's foods.

Activity: This activity was my own idea.

Create menus and role play buying food. Have student work in partners to create a list foods that interest them (e.g., ethnic foods from the story) and foods they like. Have students record their ideas. Look at a simple menu or priceboard as a class. Help students see how to transfer their ideas into a menu format. Have students create single fold menus that include the names of several foods (including an unfamiliar choice), some kind of description, a picture, and a price. Ask a few partners to use their menus and role play visiting a restaurant.
State Standard: 1.5.5 Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person.

Title of book: Seven Chinese Sisters
Author's name: Kathy Tucker
Copyright year: 2003
Genre: Multicultural
Number of pages: 29

Synopsis of Story: Seven Chinese sisters live together and take care of each other. Each one has a special talent. A dragon kidnaps the youngest sister, and the other sisters use their talents to rescue her. The sisters cooperate and combine their strengths, the youngest sister finds her voice for the first time, and the dragon is offered alternative nourishment. The youngest sister grows up to be a storyteller

Activity: I based this activity on the "What do you want to be?" lesson on the following website:
<http://www.econedlink.org/lessons/index.php?lid=207&type=educator>

Create a "wanted" ad. Discuss the seven sisters' talents. Note that the seventh sister grew up to be a storyteller. Ask what kind of jobs might grow out of the sisters' talents. As a class, work together to create a chart or idea map showing each talent and some possible jobs associated with that talent. Examine a simple "wanted" ad for a familiar occupation such as teacher, construction worker, or physician. Discuss the talents and abilities needed for the job. Organize students into small groups, and assign each group an occupation. Have them create an idea map showing the skills and talents necessary for that job. Then have them write a "wanted" ad based on the information in their idea map.

State standard: 1.4.2 Identify services that people do for each other.

Title of book: Smoky Night
Author's name: Eve Bunting
Copyright year: 1994
Genre: Multicultural
Number of pages: 28

Synopsis of Story: Daniel, his mother, and their cat watch rioting and looting from their apartment window. They see their neighbor (from a different cultural background) shouting at the looters who are damaging her store. Later, all the apartment dwellers must evacuate their burning building, although Daniel's and the neighbor's cats are missing. At a nearby shelter, they wonder what the future holds. A firefighter brings in the missing cats. The cats play together, suggesting that their owners might begin to interact and try to understand each other as well.

Activity: This activity comes from <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSLAOMDLetsGetAlong36.htm>
Write an interview. Show a picture of a person from a culture other than the dominant culture, dressed in ethnic attire (e.g., from *National Geographic*). Ask the students to write in their journals what they know or think about this person. Read *Smoky Night* aloud, stopping periodically to explore the differences among the people in the story and the ways people can handle differences. Help the students brainstorm ideas about similarities and differences between them and the person in the picture. Ask students to prepare one interview question they would like to ask the child in *Smoky Night* and one interview question they think the child would like to ask them. Then have them write a realistic answer to each question.
State standard: 3.5.5 Write for different purposes and to a specific audience or person.

Title of book: The Magic Fish
Author's name: Freya Littledale
Copyright year: 1967
Genre: Fantasy
Number of pages: 45

Synopsis of Story: A humble fisherman catches a fish and quickly returns him to the water when he sees that the fish is a magical creature. The fisherman's wife sends the fisherman back to request increasingly greedy wishes: a pretty house, a castle, the job of being queen of the land. Each time, the fish grants the wish. The fourth time, the fisherman must ask the fish to make his wife queen of the sun, moon, and stars. The fish refuses, saying "she wants too much." The fish returns her to the old hut.

Activity: This activity is inspired by the sample lesson plan "Dialogue Disguises" on the Indiana Department of Education website (http://dc.doe.state.in.us/Standards/AcademicStandards/files/eng/ela_2_1_6.pdf).

Reader's theatre. First, read *The Magic Fish* aloud very expressively, exaggerating voice changes for different characters in the story. Discuss how the reader's voice and expression reveal the character's personality and feelings. Give each student a typed copy of *The Magic Fish* on a piece of paper. Have them practice reading the three different characters expressively but quietly to themselves. Then place students into groups of three, each person taking the part of one character. Practice and perform readers' theatre for one another.

State standard: 2.1.6 Read aloud fluently and accurately with appropriate changes in voice and expression.

Title of book: Two Bad Ants
Author's name: Chris Van Allsburg
Copyright year: 1988
Genre: Fantasy
Number of pages: 31

Synopsis of Story: A group of ants sets out to bring as many sugar crystals as possible back to the queen of their colony. Two of the ants allow themselves to be enticed by the seemingly endless supply of the sweet stuff. They hang back while the rest of the ants return home. The ants quickly realize that they are in dangerous territory: they find themselves in a cup of coffee, a garbage disposal, a toaster, and an electrical outlet—all described from the ants' point of view. By the time the ants from their colony return to carry off more sugar, the two "bad ants" decide that they value the companionship and security of the colony. So they join the procession and return home, wisely carrying their crystal of sugar to their beloved queen.

Activity: See <http://www.hmhbooks.com/features/thepolarexpress/tg/twobadants.shtml#teaching>

Write a description – show not tell. Prepare the students for the book by asking them to notice how the author uses words and illustrations to *show* where the ants are without actually *telling* them. Read the book aloud, stopping to discuss where the ants are and how we can tell. After finishing the story, ask students to write about a familiar setting by describing it in detail, without revealing the setting. Put students in partners and have them read their writing to each other and guess where the setting is. Connect this lesson with the writing process (revision). Assign students to revise their writing to add more detail in a "show, not tell" sort of way.

State standard: 3.5.2 Write descriptive pieces about people, places, things, or experiences that develop a unified main idea or use details to support the main idea.

Title of book: Greek Myths
Author's name: Geraldine McCaughrean
Copyright year: 1992
Genre: Fantasy
Number of pages: 96

Synopsis of Story: This book is a collection of 16 Greek myths. Sample summary: "Atalanta's Race." Atalanta was a beautiful young woman and the fastest of all runners. She was so beautiful that men only had to see her once to fall in love with her, yet she had declared that she would only marry the man who could beat her in a race. Many men failed, and died as a result. Hippomenes wanted to marry Atalanta so much that he sought help from Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Aphrodite gave him three golden apples to throw during the race (to distract Atalanta). The trick worked; when Atalanta picked up the apples, she slowed down just long enough for Hippomenes to beat her to the finish line. Atalanta did in fact want to marry Hippomenes, so she was not very sad to see that she had lost to Hippomenes.

Activity: See <http://www.mythweb.com/teachers/tips/tips.html>

Design a board game. Have the students create a simple board game based on the character traits of the characters of Greek mythology. Make sure that the character traits influence the course of the game (e.g., if you draw a "bravery" card represented by Perseus, move ahead; skip a turn if you draw greed, shown by King Midas). As a class, discuss cause and effect, and how the characters' qualities shape the story. Discuss the role of chance or fate in the myths and how these might figure into a board game. When they have finished, have the students to exchange their games and provide feedback to each other.

State standard: 6.3.2 Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Literary Text: Analyze the effect of the qualities of the character on the plot and the resolution of the conflict.

Title of book: If You Give a Moose a Muffin
Author's name: Laura Numeroff
Copyright year: 2000
Genre: Fantasy
Number of pages: 30

Synopsis of Story: A boy give a muffin to a moose. The moose proves to be quite demanding. He asks for one after another. Each requested item reminds him of something else he wants, and the boy keeps busy satisfying the moose's whims. In the end, the moose comes full circle and requests the same thing he wanted at the beginning of the story.

Activity: See <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/unwinding-circular-plot-prediction-292.html>

Using a circular diagram, write a story with a circular plot. Read the book aloud to the class. After several pages, encourage students to fill in any text that is predictable. As a class, discuss the pattern of the story. On the board, draw a circle and label the following points in order: muffin, jam, more muffin mix, sweater, loose button, puppets, puppet show, clean up mess, blackberry bushes, jam, muffin. Help them discover that the moose's wishes bring the story back to beginning. Place students in small groups and have them create their own circular story. Help them organize their plot using a circle diagram or sentence strips. Then have them write out their story and share it with the class.

State standard: 1.4.2 Use various organizational strategies to plan writing.

Title of book: Alexander and the Wind-up Mouse

Author's name: Leo Lionni

Copyright year: 1974

Genre: Fantasy

Number of pages: 25

Synopsis of Story: Willy, a wind-up mouse, meets Alexander, a live mouse, in a toy box. Alexander wishes he could be a wind-up mouse. He visits a magic lizard who grants wishes to anyone who brings him a purple pebble. While Alexander searches for a purple pebble, Willy is nearly thrown away in a box of old toys. When he finds the purple pebble, instead of wishing to become a wind-up mouse, he wishes for Willy to change into a live mouse. The wish is granted, and the two live mice celebrate.

Activity: This is my own idea.

Summarize the story in the form of captions for story illustrations. Read the story. Discuss the skill of summarizing. Explain that we can summarize in different ways. Remind them of speech balloons (taught previously). Show a picture from a story the class is familiar with. As a class, create a speech bubble that summarizes the part of the story shown in the picture. Divide students into groups. Give each group photocopies of some of the book illustrations. Assign them to write a caption for each illustration to summarize what is going on in the story as depicted in the picture. Help them revise and edit as necessary. Have them publish by cutting out speech bubbles, writing their text neatly inside, and gluing the bubble to the picture. Compile the captioned illustrations into a class summary book.

State standard: 2.2.5 Restate facts and details or summarize the main idea in the text to clarify and organize ideas.

Title of book: *Seekers*

Author's name: Erin Hunter

Copyright year: 2008

Genre: Fantasy

Number of pages: 320

Synopsis of Story: This is the story of three wild bears of different species who are separated from their families when they are cubs. The black bear lives in a zoo, but she escapes in order to experience the wild. While searching for food across miles of ice, the polar bear watches as her mother is pulled underwater by an orca. The grizzly bear's mother goes crazy and abandons him. Each bear wanders alone, then joins or follows others of its species. They navigate the dangers posed by other animals, the weather, and humans. Eventually, the three wild bears cross paths in northern Canada.

Activity: This is my own idea.

Create a dictionary translating animal expressions into human, English expressions. Many expressions in the narrative reflect the bears' point of view. For example, the bears call a highway a "blackpath." The longest day (most sunlight) of the year is "burnsky." The bears also name landmarks in a way that is meaningful to them. To teach students how to use a dictionary, have the students create a bear dictionary with bear expressions, definitions, and diagrams. Or they could create a bear-human and/or a human-bear dictionary listing each expression and its equivalent.

State Standard 3.1.7 — Use a dictionary to learn the meaning and pronunciation of unknown words.

Title of book: *Will's Quill, or How a Goose Saved Shakespeare*

Author's name: Don Freeman

Copyright year: 2004

Genre: Fantasy

Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: A goose named Willoughby Waddles lives near London during the early career of William Shakespeare. Willoughby longs to be a significant, useful goose, so he ventures into London. After several mishaps, he is befriended by a playwright named Will. Will stays up late working on a play, and is frustrated that his quills keep breaking. Willoughby finally finds his calling: he gives up some of his goose feathers to aid his new friend. Will completes the play, and it is a success.

Activity: <http://www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=2035> and list of idioms at <http://www.folger.edu/documents/Try%20Your%20Hand%20at%20Shakespeare.pdf>

Make and submit a poster to illustrate and explain idioms. Talk about the variety of English used in dialogue in the book. Review the pages that show Willoughby intervening in a stage swordfight. Look at the expression “foul play” as well as the pun “fowl play.” Tell the students that Shakespeare probably coined this phrase. Show a list of other idioms that originated with Shakespeare’s works (e.g., hold a candle to, laughing stock, in a pickle, without rhyme or reason, elbow room, dead as a doornail). Foster the students’ work consciousness by having them create idiom posters for one of the expressions. Submit the posters to the [Folger Shakespeare Library](#) in Washington, D.C. via the website listed above.

State Standard 4.1.2 — Vocabulary and Concept Development: Apply knowledge of synonyms (words with the same meaning), antonyms (words with opposite meanings), homographs (words that are spelled the same but have different meanings), and idioms (expressions that cannot be understood just by knowing the meanings of the words in the expression, such as *couch potato*) to determine the meaning of words and phrases.

Title of book: *Officer Buckle and Gloria*

Author's name: Peggy Rathman

Copyright year: 1995

Genre: Fantasy

Number of pages: 40

Synopsis of Story: Officer Buckle knows more about safety than anyone in town, but whenever he tries to share his safety tips, nobody listens. Then the police department buys Officer Buckle a police dog named Gloria. During Officer Buckle's lectures, Gloria stands behind her owner and entertains the audience with her demonstrations of the safety tips. Suddenly, everyone pays attention and shows their appreciation with loud applause and letters of admiration. When Officer Buckle realizes that Gloria is stealing his show, he refuses to lecture about safety tips anymore, and the drop in safety lectures creates a huge hazard for the town. Officer Buckle receives enough fan mail to change his mind about giving safety lectures. He accepts his sidekick's appeal, and he understands that the town residents love him as much as they love Gloria and her tricks.

Activity: This was my own idea.

Write a class thank you letter to a police officer (and dog if possible!) who visits the class. As a class, read *Officer Buckle and Gloria*. Arrange for a police officer and dog to visit the classroom and discuss issues of safety. After his or her visit, reread *Officer Buckle and Gloria* and review the pages that show children's letters to Officer Buckle. Using the Language Experience Approach, create a class thank you letter and mail it to the officer.

State Standard K.2.5 —Identify the role of students in the classroom and the importance of following school rules to ensure order and safety.

Title of book: *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*

Author's name: Dr. Seuss

Copyright year: 1949

Genre: Fantasy

Number of pages: 56

Synopsis of Story: The king of Didd is tired of conventional precipitation. He wants something new to fall, and so he commissions his magicians to add some variety to the weather. Unfortunately, he gets his wish in the form of oobleck: gooey green slime. The king soon regrets his wish, but the magicians cannot reverse the spell since their cave is buried in oobleck. Eventually, the king's page, Bartholomew, advises him to say a different set of magic words: "I'm sorry." The king agrees, and the oobleck melts away.

Activity: Inspired by Stacy Stetzel and based on <http://mailjust4me.com/play/seuss.htm>

Create a public service announcement. Discuss states of matter, at the operational and molecular level. Review the ways in which matter changes in response to heat and pressure. How thick is the substance, and how fast does it flow? Introduce the "fourth state of matter:" a non-Newtonian fluid, nicknamed "oobleck." Mix 2 cups cornstarch, 1 cup water, and green food coloring. Put the "oobleck" on a sheet of wax paper to allow students to manipulate it. Discuss this strange form of matter. Is it liquid? Or solid? How would oobleck feel if it fell from the sky? Assign the students to create a full page public service announcement warning people of the dangers of oobleck. The "ad" should include a complete description of the stuff, examples of the problems caused by it (reference Bartholomew Cubbins), and a picture.

State Standard 6.1.2 — Explain the properties of solids, liquids and gases using drawings and models that represent matter as particles in motion whose state can be represented by the relative positions and movement of the particles.

Title of book: *The Royal Bee*

Author's name: Frances Park, Ginger Park, and Christopher Zhong-Yuan Zhang

Copyright year: 2000

Genre: Historical fiction

Number of pages: 28

Synopsis of Story: In 32 pages of text and oil painting, the authors introduce Song-ho, a nineteenth-century Korean boy who is too poor to attend school. One day, after finishing his chores, Song-ho sneaks to a nearby school while his widowed mother works hard in the fields. Song-ho listens to the lessons through the door. Thanks to the schoolmaster's kindness and vision, Song-ho is not only allowed to join the school, but also later participates in *The Royal Bee*, a contest that determines the best student in the land. He wins the contest after answering the final question: "What does winning *The Royal Bee* mean to you?" Song-ho is delighted to surprise his mother with the news. He is finally able to give her and himself the opportunity of a better life.

Activity: This is my own idea.

Write and perform questions for a citizenship interview/test. Tell students about the process of applying for U.S. citizenship including the interview/test. Organize students into small groups. Ask them to write down five objective questions and one thought question similar to what the governor asked the final two contestants in *The Royal Bee*. Have students rehearse the questions and answers. Arrange for each group to perform the citizenship test in front of the class. Or, have groups ask each other the questions they generated. Or, give one group the name of a famous good citizen, and have that person answer in character. Afterward, as a group, reflect on what makes a person a good citizen and how young people can be good citizens. Be careful of students who might not have legal status or who might not be citizens. Also perhaps emphasize the concept of being a citizen of the world—being productive and responsible regardless of one's residency.

State Standard 3.2.5 — Roles of Citizens: Explain the importance of being a good citizen of the state and the nation. Identify people in the state who exhibit the characteristics of good citizenship.

Title of book: *The Man Who Walked between the Towers*

Author's name: Mordecai Gerstein

Copyright year: 2003

Genre: Historical fiction

Number of pages: 40

Synopsis of Story: In 1974, a young French street performer named Philippe Petit lived in New York City. While looking at the World Trade Center towers one day, Philippe decided he wanted to walk on a tightrope between them. He and his friends spent an entire night setting up the cable on which he would walk. At sunrise, he stepped out onto the wire. He spent an hour walking, dancing, and performing high-wire tricks a quarter mile in the sky. He was arrested, but soon released and ordered to continue performing in the park.

Activity: *Literacy for the 21st century: A balanced approach*, pp. 449-450

Open mind portrait. Tell the students that characters are developed in the following ways: physical description, actions, dialogue, and monologue (this can also mean the characters' thoughts). Write these on the chalkboard. Explain open mind portraits: the character's face, portrait page, thinking pages. Read *The Man Who Walked between the Towers* aloud, instructing students to listen for things they could include in their open mind portraits. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group create an open mind portrait of the main character. Read the story aloud one more time so that students can add more to their portraits.

State Standard 3.3.3 — Determine what characters are like by what they say or do and by how the author or illustrator portrays them.

Title of book: *The Yellow Star: The Legend of King Christian X of Denmark*

Author's name: Carmen Agra Deedy

Copyright year: 2000

Genre: Historical fiction

Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: This story takes place during WWII when the Nazis first began to occupy Denmark. Trying to keep life as normal as possible and preserve the people's dignity, King Christian X continues to ride on horseback, unprotected every day through the streets of Denmark. He even raises the Danish flag himself. When the Nazis try to divide and scare Danish subjects by requiring all Jews to wear a yellow star on their clothing, the king devises a way to protect them. He makes his usual morning rounds, but wears a yellow Star of David on his suit. The last illustration in the book shows the people of Denmark following their king's lead. The final line sums up the book's message of solidarity: "And, once again, in the country of Denmark, there were only Danes."

Activity: This was my own idea.

Write diary entries. Read *The Yellow Star* over several days. After each reading, have the students assume a role (Danish Jew, Danish non-Jew, King Christian X, Nazi occupier) and write a diary entry from that person's point of view. Each diary entry should cover the events from the most recent portion of the story. After completing the book, group students together to share their diary entries and discuss the events from a variety of points of view. State Standard 4.5.6 Write for different purposes (information, persuasion, description) and to a specific audience or person.

Title of book: *Snowflake Bentley*

Author's name: Jacqueline Briggs Martin

Copyright year: 1998

Genre: Historical fiction

Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: This is a true story, set in the late 19th century, about a Vermont farm boy named Wilson Bentley, who grows into being a self-taught scientist. Wilson loves snowflakes. He wants to take pictures of snowflakes, but they always melt. When he is 16, his parents sacrifice much of their savings to buy him microscope-camera. After two years of trial and error, he finds a way to take quality photographs of the snowflakes he loves. He spends his life taking beautiful snowflake pictures and sharing their simple, beautiful patterns with friends and scientists alike. His microphotographs help prove that no two snowflakes are alike.

Activity: See <http://www.wsanford.com/~wsanford/exo/snowflakes.html> and <http://snowflakebentley.com/>

Write a diamante poem (a poem with 7 lines, shaped like a diamond). Ask students to list nouns, adjectives, action verbs related to *Snowflake Bentley*. Show them the format for a *diamante poem* along with some examples. Here is the format: line 1: 1 word that is a subject/noun that is contrasting to line 7; line 2: 2 adjectives that describe line 1; line 3: 3 action verbs that relate to line 1; line 4: 4 nouns—first 2 words relate to line 1 and the last 2 words relate to line 7; line 5: 3 action verbs that relate to line 7; line 6: two adjectives that describe line 7; line 7: one word that is a subject/noun that is contrasting to line 1. Have students create a diamante poem relating to *Snowflake Bentley*. Make sure they follow the writing process, including publishing their poetry.

State Standard 4.5.5 Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.

Title of book: *Sign of the Beaver*
Author's name: Elizabeth George Speare
Copyright year: 1984
Genre: Historical fiction
Number of pages: 144

Synopsis of Story: This story takes place in what later becomes the state of Maine. Matt, a 12-year-old boy, is left alone while his father leaves to bring back the rest of his family. In order to survive, he uses skills he learned both from his parents and from the Indians who live nearby. Matt meets Attean, a young Indian boy about his own age. At first they misunderstand each other, but slowly they develop mutual respect as they learn more about each other's cultures. By the time Attean's extended family is ready to move on, Matt's family has not returned. Matt is tempted to join them, but decides to stay and guard the land and home he and his father had built. Matt's family finally returns. Both Matt and Attean come of age in their own way.

Activity: Based on http://dc.doe.state.in.us/Standards/AcademicStandards/files/eng/ela_5_7_6.pdf

Oral retelling. After reading *Sign of the Beaver*, have each student prepare an oral presentation – an oral retelling of an episode from the story. For example, a student might retell how Matt and Attean killed the bear. Discuss the importance of nonverbal cues, volume, phrasing, pausing, etc. Have the students write out their presentations, practice in front of a mirror, and revise their plans accordingly. Arrange to audiotape or videotape each student's speech, and have the students critique their performance using a rubric. Finally, after reviewing the role of the audience and audience manners, have each student deliver their retellings in front of the class. Again, have the students do a self-evaluation.

State Standard 5.7.6 Use volume, phrasing, timing, and gestures appropriately to enhance meaning.

Title of book: *Boxes for Katje*
Author's name: Candace Fleming
Copyright year: 2003
Genre: Historical fiction
Number of pages: 40

Synopsis of Story: The story tells of a young girl, Katje, who lives in Holland after World War II. Upon the end of the war she receives a box from a girl in America, who donates chocolate among other things to help those in need after the war. Responding back with much thanks, Katje and her family are extremely appreciative of the gifts. Throughout the book, the girl from America continues to send more and more gifts. Her hometown sends many boxes by the end of the book, wanting to help the families in Holland. Katje wants to give back and sends her young friend boxes of tulip bulbs to show her appreciation.

Activity: This activity was my own idea.

Using a scale, create a package of a certain weight. After reading *Boxes for Katje*, discuss how we can be like the girls and create care packages to help people in need. Identify a good cause to which the class can donate items that are easy to acquire (e.g., canned goods for food bank, hygiene kits for disaster victims). The list might include canned foods, toothpaste, etc. Have them collect a few of the items from home. Review the pages that talk about the weight of the package and how hard it was for the mail carrier to deliver. Put the students in groups and ask them to assemble packages under a certain weight. Have the students add and remove items to achieve a weight that is closest to the goal weight. Send or deliver the packages.

State Standard 2.5.6 Estimate weight and use a given object to measure the weight of other objects.

Title of book: *The Doorbell Rang*

Author's name: Pat Hutchins

Copyright year: 1989

Genre: Realistic fiction

Number of pages: 24

Synopsis of Story: Two friends, Victoria and Sam, are delighted when their mother bakes a dozen cookies. Mother appreciates the compliment, but says her cookies do not measure up to Grandma's cookies. The children count the cookies and find that each of them can eat six cookies. But the doorbell rings, friends arrive and the cookies must be divided into smaller portions. This happens again and again, and the number of cookies on each plate decreases. When each child's share is down to one, and the doorbell rings again, Sam and Victoria don't want to answer the door. Luckily, it's Grandma at the door with a tray of many more cookies.

Activity: A combination of my ideas and Van de Walle, J., Karp, K., & Bay-Williams, J. (2010) *Elementary and middle school mathematics: teaching developmentally*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, 307.

Identify fractions and write a new math story problem. Read the story aloud. Then organize the students into small groups. Give each group 12 (wrapped) cookies and have the students repeat the division problems from the book. Ask them to create and explore a new cookie-based story problem using a different total number of cookies. Have the groups exchange and solve each other's story problems.

State Standard 4.2.3 Represent as division any situation involving the sharing of objects or the number of groups of shared objects.

Title of book: *Six-Dinner Sid*

Author's name: Inga Moore

Copyright year: 1993

Genre: Realistic fiction

Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: Sid is a cat who lives on Aristotle Street. Because the residents of Aristotle Street don't talk to one another, Sid makes six different people think he belongs to them. He works hard for his six daily suppers. He must respond to six different names and exhibit six types of behavior. Then one day, Sid gets sick. Each of the six owners take him to the animal hospital—the *same* animal hospital. The observant veterinarian realizes he is examining the same cat over and over. When his six "owners" find out what Sid has been up to, they conspire to make sure he receives only one meal a day. Sid still likes to eat a lot, though, so he just moves to Pythagoras Place. On Pythagoras Place, the neighbors *do* talk to one another, but they don't sharing the privilege of being Sid's owners.

Activity: http://writingfix.com/Picture_Book_Prompts/Six_Dinner_Sid3.htm

Identify a theme and write an original story that teaches that theme. Discuss the concept of theme. Distinguish theme from subject. With the students, explore themes of stories they are familiar with. Help them distill *Sid-Dinner Sid* into a one-sentence theme. Then assign them to write an original story that teaches the exact same theme.

State Standard 4.3.6 Determine the theme.

Title of book: *Boxcar Children No. 1*
Author's name: Gertrude Chandler Warner
Copyright year: 1942
Genre: Realistic fiction
Number of pages: 154

Synopsis of Story: This story opens with four siblings whose parents have just died. The authorities are talking about splitting the children up and placing them in different homes. The children overhear these discussions and decide to run away so that they can remain together. They make their home in an old abandoned railroad boxcar. Using ingenuity and skill, the children manage to survive as a family while their grandfather (whom they mistakenly fear) searches for them. Eventually the children are forced to trust others to help them. They realize that they *do* belong with their grandfather. They move in with him, but always treasure their beloved boxcar and the days they spent living in it.

Activity: <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSOWantsAndNeeds-WithMagazinePics12.htm>

Create a collage. After reading about half the book, discuss the difference between wants and needs, including the importance of context. Organize students into small groups. Give each group magazines. Have the students cut out pictures of things that represent both wants and needs. Assign the students to create a collage presenting the two concepts. Have each group write a short summary of how they interpret wants vs. needs. Pair up the groups and have them examine each others' collages. Encourage them to question each other about the pictures they chose to include in the collage.

State Standard 3.4.1 Give examples from the local community that illustrate the scarcity of productive resources. Explain how this scarcity requires people to make choices and incur opportunity costs.

Title of book: *The Show-and-Tell Lion*
Author's name: Barbara Abercrombie
Copyright year: 2006
Genre: Realistic fiction
Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: It's Matthew's turn for show-and-tell. He tells the class that he has a pet lion. He means to admit that the lion is make-believe, but he is so good at imagining and storytelling that the lion seems very real. Every day, his friends want to hear more about the lion. Finally, the class starts to plan a field trip to Matthew's house to see the lion. An embarrassed Matthew and his mother discuss his dilemma. As a solution, Matthew writes and illustrates the story he has been telling his class. When he shows it to them the next day, at first they are angry and accuse him of lying, but Matthew and his classmates are able to use the lion episode to better understand the nature of stories, imagination, and honesty.

Activity: This activity is my own idea.

Illustrate and label one fact or one fantasy. Activate the students' background knowledge about lions using informational books, a video, and the class's recent visit to the zoo. Then read *The Show-and-Tell Lion*. Create a t-chart on poster paper and label the columns *Facts* and *Fantasy*. Ask the students to help fill out the chart. Have some of the students write *lion* and some of the high frequency words they know on the chart. Have the students draw a picture of something from the t-chart (or their own idea) and label it as fact or fantasy.

State Standard K.3.1 Distinguish fantasy from reality.

Title of book: *Thunder Cake*

Author's name: Patricia Polacco

Copyright year: 1990

Genre: Realistic fiction

Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: A storm approaches Grandma's farm, and her frightened granddaughter hides under the bed. But Grandma insists that this is the right weather for baking Thunder Cake. The granddaughter comes out reluctantly. Soon they are scrambling around the house and farm gathering cake ingredients. Grandma also explains how to tell the distance between them and the storm, and how much time they have to get the cake into the oven. The granddaughter is so busy preparing the cake that she begins to overcome her fear of storms.

Activity: <http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSOWantsAndNeeds-WithMagazinePics12.htm> and <http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/english/onomatopoeia.htm>

Write a new verse to a song using sound words (and make the cake). Ask students to think of sounds from the farm. As they offer ideas, write the sounds on the board. Also list and write on the board the sound words used to describe thunder in the story. Read each one, and have students be the echo. Tell students that writers sometimes use words to describe sounds, and they try to make the words sound like the sounds. Teach the students to sing "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" but demonstrate how to replace the first line with o-no-ma-to-po-e-i-a (work in that one extra syllable). This will teach them how to spell *onomatopoeia*. In groups, have them create three original verses to this song using sound words.

State Standard 3.7.4 Identify the musical elements of literary language, such as rhymes, repeated sounds, and instances of onomatopoeia (naming something by using a sound associated with it, such as *hiss* or *buzz*).

Title of book: *Owen and Mzee: The true story of a remarkable friendship*

Author's name: [Isabella Hatkoff](#), [Craig Hatkoff](#), [Paula Kahumbu](#)

Copyright year: 2006

Genre: Nonfiction

Number of pages: 40

Synopsis of Story: This book tells the inspiring true story of two great but unlikely friends, a baby hippo named Owen and a 130-yr-old giant tortoise named Mzee (Mm-ZAY). When Owen was stranded after the December 2004 tsunami, villagers in Kenya worked together to rescue him. To everyone's surprise, the little hippo and the elderly tortoise befriended and adopted each other when they ended up sharing the same habitat. Villagers, journalists, and scientists alike observed as Owen and Mzee swam, ate, and played together. The book compares the two creatures' behavior and diet, their interactions with other animals, and the pros and cons of their lasting bond. The book raises questions about rescue, friendship, and learning from differences.

Activity: <http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=1307>

Make a map of a habitat. Explain to students that Owen and Mzee live with other animals on a reservation in Kenya, Africa called Haller Park. Define "ecosystem" as an ecological community together with its environment, functioning as a unit. Create a large map of Haller Park on the floor or on a table in the classroom (showing only borders, a few ponds, and a river). Assign students to different plants and animals that inhabit the area. Help the class plan how they will create a 3-dimensional representation of Haller Park. The students will be in charge of briefly researching their assigned plant or animal. They will find materials to make their particular plant or animal for the map. Before adding an object to the map, the student will make a short oral presentation about the plant or animal. Suggested content for the short presentation: What is the Swahili name for this plant or animal? Is this plant or animal endangered? Where in Kenya can one find this creature outside of Haller Park? How does this organism fit into the ecosystem?

State Standard 6.3.2 — Describe how changes caused by organisms in the habitat where they live can be beneficial or detrimental to themselves or to native plants and animals.

Title of book: *Stars beneath your bed: The surprising story of dust*

Author's name: April Pulley Sayre

Copyright year: 2005

Genre: Nonfiction

Number of pages: 32

Synopsis of Story: Dust is everywhere. It seems like a nuisance—small, dark, and dirty. But readers may be surprised to learn some interesting facts about dust. Dust scatters sunlight into the colors visible at sunrise and sunset. The book explains that dust is made and spread everywhere, every day: a dog shakes off dirt, a butterfly flutters, dry skin falls from our arms, dirt from an asteroid filters down to earth. Wind carries bits of dust throughout the earth, so “that dusty film on your computer screen might have muddied a dinosaur.”

Activity: This activity is my own idea.

Write a book report. This book is nonfiction written in poem format. As a step toward students writing their own research reports, have the students write a report on this book. Show them how to condense into prose some of the ideas that take many pages to express in poetry. Remind them to vary their sentence structure. Allow them to use bullet points, an idea web, and other ways of organizing information. Have them include actual dust in some form, and label it as dust that might have originated in an interesting time or place of their choice.

State Standard 3.5.8 — Research Application: Write or deliver a research report that has been developed using a systematic research process and that 1) uses a variety of sources and documents sources, and 2) organizes information by categorizing it into more than one category or includes information gained through observation.

Title of book: *Rushmore*

Author's name: Lynn Curlee

Copyright year: 1999

Genre: Nonfiction

Number of pages: 48

Synopsis of Story: This book tells the story of Gutzon Borglum, the sculptor who designed and directed the carving of the presidents' faces on Mount Rushmore. Borglum, the son of Danish immigrants, overcame tremendous obstacles to create this famous masterpiece. The book places the sculpture in historical context (the monument was declared finished just before the U.S. entered WWII and just after Borglum's death) and explains fascinating details about the techniques Borglum used. Readers also learn about Borglum's legacy: patriotic pride, the courage to dream, and an uncommon adaptability to the many changes and surprises that challenged his original plans.

Activity: This activity is my own idea.

Write a brochure article (problem-solution structure). Write a one- or two- page newspaper article about problems that came up during the design and carving of the four presidents' faces on Mount Rushmore, and how those problems were solved. Examples of problems: dwindling money to fund the project, remoteness of the location, finding faulty rock, disagreements between Borglum and workers or the government, and health hazards.

State Standard 6.5.2 Write descriptions, explanations, comparison and contrast papers, and problem and solution essays that state the thesis or purpose; explain the situation; organize the composition clearly; and offer evidence to support arguments and conclusions.

Title of book: *The Story of Money*

Author's name: Betsy Maestro

Copyright year: 1995

Genre: Nonfiction

Number of pages: 48

Synopsis of Story: This book gives a mini-history of money and a simple explanation of economics. The author explains the concept of bartering and shows how bartering evolved into the modern practice of trading money for goods and services. Readers learn that money looks different in different countries, and it has not always looked the way it looks now. The book showcases examples such as Native American wampum, Spanish “pieces of eight,” European precious metal coins, and printed paper bills. Readers learn that although many money systems exist or existed in the past, the money serves most of the same functions in every time and place it is used.

Activity: http://dc.doe.state.in.us/Standards/AcademicStandards/files/soc/ss_4_4_6.pdf

Create a currency. After reading the book, discuss money from different countries, possibly by visiting a money museum (www.rich.frb.org/econed/museum/index.html). Discuss how people use money. Guide students to discuss that money helps people trade, measures the value of items, and allows them to save for later. Have students name the different items that have been used as money throughout history. List all of this on the chalkboard. Tell students that they are each going to design their own money using art supplies. Instruct them to create a type of money that meets all the functions of money they listed on the chalkboard. Have each student share his/her money with the class and explain how it meets the functions of money.

State Standard 4.4.6 — List the functions of money and compare and contrast things that have been used as money in the past in Indiana, the United States and the world.

Title of book: *Animal Defenses: How Animals Protect Themselves*

Author's name: Etta Kaner,

Copyright year: 1999

Genre: Nonfiction

Number of pages: 40

Synopsis of Story: This book describes how animals use a variety of different techniques to protect themselves. The text draws parallels between animals and people facing danger. Similar animal behaviors are grouped under general categories such as “Putting on a Show,” “Let’s Stick Together,” and “You Can’t Catch Me.” Within each section, several animals are presented. Readers can examine their protective physical features or behaviors in detailed illustrations.

Activity: http://dc.doe.state.in.us/Standards/AcademicStandards/files/eng/ela_3_2_5.pdf

Take notes during reading for main ideas and supporting details. Prepare a note-taking page with sections to focus thinking on main idea, example, detail, and summarizing sentence. After reading a chapter as a class, encourage students to think of a word to describe the kind of defense discussed in that chapter. Have students write a word of their choice on their note-taking page. Ask students to provide an example of an animal that uses this kind of defense. Next, write a sentence together that gives the main idea about that kind of animal defense. Finally, ask them to pick an interesting detail about that type of defense and make a note about it. Have them complete the exercise for the rest of the book in partners.

State Standard: 3.2.5 — Distinguish the main idea and supporting details in informational text.