

Title: Bridge to Terabithia
Author: Katherine Paterson

Publisher: Harper Collins Publishers Inc.
Reading Level: 5-6th grade

Copyright Year: 1972
Genre: Realistic Fiction

Synopsis of Story:

Jess Aarons, an 11 year old boy who loves to run, trained all summer to be the fastest boy in the 5th grade. The race on the first day of school was where he first met Leslie, who actually beat him and everyone else in the race. Despite being mocked for their cross-gender friendship, Jess and Leslie became best friends. They were neighbors and spent their afternoons playing together. Leslie had a wonderful imagination and together, they made up their own secret world called Terabithia where nobody could harm them and nothing could go wrong. However, one day Jess spent an entire day in town with their teacher and came home to hear the news that his best friend drowned in the river when the rope they used to swing on to transport themselves to Terabithia broke. Jess struggles with her death, but finally realizes her memory will live on in Terabithia.

Theme: This book has a theme of friendship and imagination.

Activity One: Shadow Box

Origination of Idea: This is an original idea from the brain of Julie Hamm

Objective:

- Students will be able to use the descriptions in the text and their imagination to create a shadow box of what Terabithia looked like.

Description of Activity:

- The teacher will read aloud to the students while they follow along
- After the book is finished the class will brainstorm together what Terabithia looked like by making lists of adjectives or phrases on the board
- Have the students each bring in a shoe box
- They will create a shadow box of Terabithia using construction paper, clay, plastic models they have from home, or any other items they can think of
- The model must be 3-D
- Have each student present their shadow box to the class, explaining what each item is and why they included it

Activity Two: Jess or Leslie?

Origination of Idea: This idea was adapted from a similar activity seen on the website:
www.education-world.com/a_lesson/03.lp301-01.shtml

Objective:

- Students will evaluate each of the main characters and decide which one they would want to be friends with and why.

Description of Activity:

- After reading the book independently, students will be asked to make a list of traits for each of the main characters: Jess and Leslie
- Instruct them to think about both positive and negative traits
- Then have them make a different list of traits they would want in a friend
- After they make each list of traits, they will write a short essay on which character they would rather be friends with. They must choose either Jess or Leslie
- Both lists of traits will be incorporated into the essay and will serve as justification for why they did or did not choose that character

Title: Alexander and Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day

Author: Judith Viorst

Publisher: Aladdin Paperbacks

Reading Level: 3rd Grade

Copyright Year: 1972

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Synopsis of Story:

Alexander, the main character, woke up having a bad day because he had gum in his hair, he tripped, and dropped his sweater in the sink. His day turned into a series of events that just kept getting worse. All he wanted to do all day was move to Australia because he just wanted to get away. His bad day rubs off on other people too. For example, he went to his dad's office where he knocked over books, spilled ink, and messed up the copy machine. Finally, by the end of the day, he realizes that sometimes everybody has bad days, even in Australia.

Theme: This book shows that sometimes everybody has bad days and that you can survive bad days, no matter how many bad things happen to you.

Activity One: Timeline

Origination of Idea: This is an original idea from the brain of Julie Hamm

Objective:

- Students will use sequencing skills to make a timeline of Alexander's day

Description of Activity:

- Have students use buddy reading to read the book
- When they have finished, ask them to list the activities Alexander does in chronological order
- When they have finished listing them, give the pair of students a large sheet of paper big enough for them to make a timeline on
- Each part of Alexander's day should be placed on the timeline and illustrated
- The timeline should be split into 3 sections (morning, school, and evening)

Activity Two: Talk Show

Origination of Idea: This activity was adapted from a similar activity seen on the website:

<http://www.englishcompanion.com/assignments/reading/103readingactivities.htm>

Objective: Students will identify with Alexander and explain how he felt throughout the day

Description of Activity:

- After the students have read the book, split them into groups of 5.

- Assign students different roles (Alexander, Talk Show Host, Paul, Mother/Father, Anthony/Nick)
- Explain to the students that they will be putting on their own talk show titled THE WORST DAY EVER with Alexander as the main guest
- The Host needs to come up with questions to ask Alexander, the Mother/Father, his brothers Anthony and Nick, and his best friend Paul.
- Each person will answer the questions the way they think their character would answer them
- The questions for Alexander need to relate to everything that went wrong that day, how he felt, and how he reacted
- The answers for the other characters should be about how Alexander made them feel, how they contributed to Alexander's bad day, or how they helped Alexander get through his bad day.
- Give the students enough time to think of questions and practice how they will answer the questions
- When each group is ready have each group perform their talk show skit in front of the class. (you might need to spend more than one day coming up with questions and practicing)

Title: Ramona and her Father

Author: Beverly Cleary

Publisher: Willow Morrow and Company, Inc.

Reading Level: 4th Grade

Copyright Year: 1975

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Synopsis of Story:

This book describes Ramona Quimby's year in second grade. She has to deal with a lot of things such as her dad losing his job, pursuing a dream of earning a million dollars doing television commercials, and realizing her dad has quite a temper. The family struggles with Mr. Quimby losing his job and he starts smoking. Ramona worries that her father's smoking will turn his lungs black, so she starts an intense No Smoking Campaign. However, the Quimby's prove to be resilient and survive the obstacles thrown at them.

Theme: This book has a theme of family struggles

Activity One: No Smoking Campaign

Origination of Idea: This was an original idea from the brain of Julie Hamm

Objectives:

- Students will make a similar No Smoking poster and list reasons why smoking is harmful

Description of Activity:

- Students will read Ramona and her Father independently
- After they have completed reading, the teacher will instruct them to think about Ramona's No Smoking Campaign. (think about why she did it, did she list reasons why she wanted her father to stop smoking, how did she go about it)
- Have them write a short paragraph about whether her campaign had an impact on her father's behavior
- Have them do some research on the internet about the harmful effects of smoking
- Have them make a poster that includes at least 3 harmful effects from smoking
- Encourage creativity!

Activity Two: Book Jacket

Origination of Idea: This is an original idea from the brain of Julie Hamm

Objective:

- Students will construct and illustrate a book jacket that summarizes the story, provides author and illustration information, and illustrates at least 2 scenes from the book.

Description of Activity:

- Have the students read the book independently
- When the students have finished reading, they may begin making a book jacket for the book
- Give them a piece of construction paper (Let them pick which color, but do not include black)
- Have turn it horizontal and fold the left and right edges in about 3-4 inches
- Then have them fold the entire piece of paper in half in the middle hamburger style
- Have them turn it so the fold is on the left just like a book (the flaps should be on the inside)
- On the front cover they should include the title, author, and illustrator as well as a picture of something interesting that happens in the book
- On the inside flap directly behind the cover, they should write a brief summary of the book that does not completely give away the ending, but provides enough information for the reader
- On the back they should draw another picture of another interesting element of the story
- On the back inside cover they should write a very brief “About the Author” section. They can use the information from their book or look on the internet for information

Title: Third Grade Wedding Bells?

Author: Colleen O'Shaughnessy McKenna

Publisher: Holiday House

Reading Level: 3rd Grade

Copyright Year: 2006

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Synopsis of Story:

Gordie is in third grade and absolutely loves his teacher, Mrs. Tingle. However, he becomes very nervous once he learns that his class will be putting on a holiday play. He becomes even more nervous when a girl in the class reminds everyone how he ruined the last play. Words cannot describe how nervous he becomes when Mrs. Tingle assigns him to have the lead role as the prince. In his opinion, things cannot get any worse, but then Mrs. Tingle tells the class she is getting married and might be moving away. Gordie and his friends do everything in their power to try to get her to stay. They also do everything in their power to survive putting on the play.

Theme: This story has a theme of overcoming problems and believing in yourself

Activity One: Perform Your Own Play

Origination of Idea: This is an original idea from the brain of Julie Hamm

Objective:

- Students will put on a play, remembering how the characters in the story felt and how they overcame their stage fright and being nervous

Description of Activity:

- After the class has read the book via buddy reading, explain to them that they will be doing their own holiday play to perform for parent night (an example play would be: http://www.christmasplays.com/The_Christmas_Competition.htm)
- Assign each student in class a role in the play
- Have them think about the children in the book and how they felt throughout the process of learning their lines and performing the play
- Have them list how characters felt and how they dealt with those feelings (feelings such as stage fright, forgetting their lines, and being afraid of ruining the play might be possible suggestions)
- On the back of their paper, have them make a list of how they feel about doing a play and how they will deal with their feelings
- Give them all scripts of the play and have them high-light their parts
- Practice the play out loud in class and make sure students learn their lines
- A few days before performing the play, have students look at their lists to see if they dealt with their feelings the way they said they would

Activity Two: Cliff Notes

Origination of Idea: This idea was adapted from a similar activity seen on the website: <http://www.englishcompanion.com/assignments/reading/103readingactivities.htm>

Objective:

- Students will individually summarize chapters and as a class will make a book similar to cliff notes

Description of Activity:

- After students read the book independently, the teacher will assign each student a chapter to summarize
- The student will reread their chapter and write a brief 3-4 sentence summary (gifted students will be required to do 2 chapters and some students will work in pairs)
- After each student has completed their summary, the class will talk about the five story elements: plot, characters, setting, point of view, and theme.
- As a class, they will come up with a 3 sentence summary of the plot, list and briefly describe the characters, describe the setting, determine the point of view, and determine the theme.
- The teacher will type all of this on one page and that will be the first page of their cliff notes book
- The students will type their summaries during computer lab time
- When everyone's summaries are typed and complete, the teacher will staple them together, creating their own cliff notes for Third Grade Wedding Bells?

Title: Granddad's Fishing Buddy

Author: Mary Quigley

Publisher: The Penguin Group

Reading Level: 2nd grade

Copyright Year: 2007

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Synopsis of Story:

Sara was staying overnight with her grandparents at their lake house one weekend. She knew she had to stay up late if she did not want to miss anything. Early in the morning, she saw Granddad getting ready to head outside. She caught up with him, and asked where he was going. He told her he was going fishing and after a lot of begging, he decided to let Sara come with him. Granddad kept talking about his fishing buddy and Sara kept wondering when she was going to meet him. Finally, she figured out that Granddad's fishing buddy was not a person, but a heron.

Theme: This book has a theme of having patience and realizing that sometimes things aren't always as they seem.

Activity One: Acrostic Poem

Origination of Idea: This idea as adapted from a similar activity seen in Mrs. Hawkins class

Objective:

- Students will write an acrostic poem about Fishing

Description of Activity:

- The teacher will read the book out loud to the class
- After he/she is finished they will discuss as a class who Granddad's fishing buddy was and why he was such a good fishing buddy
- Then the teacher will explain what an acrostic poem is
- They will do an example of an acrostic poem with the word "buddy" using information from the book such as: **B**lue is the color of the water as sit waiting, **U**nder the water is where the fish are, **D**on't make a sound or you will scare the fish, **D**o be patient, **Y**ell when finally catch one!
- After the students help you with your example, leave it on the board and ask them to do an acrostic poem for the word "Fishing" using information in the book

Activity Two: Making Inferences

Origination of Idea: This is an original idea from the brain of Julie Hamm

Objective:

- Students will be able to figure out who Granddad's fishing buddy is and why he is such as great fishing buddy by making inferences from the text

Description of Activity:

- Have the students read the book independently
- When students have finished reading, talk to them about making inferences (understanding what the author means without actually reading those exact words)
- Have them reread the story, making inferences. Have them make at least 2 inferences (one of them needs to be who Granddad's fishing buddy is besides Sara. Another could be where Grandma is when Granddad and Sara leave to go fishing)
- They should write down their inferences and write down specific clues that were given that helped them make that inference (They followed the heron from spot to spot and kept catching fish. Granddad also said he would meet his fishing buddy on the lake. The heron is Granddad's fishing buddy.)