

Children's Literature Across the Curriculum Ideas

Created by students at the University of North Carolina Charlotte

Title: *The Great Kapok Tree..*

Author: Lynne Cherry

Publisher/Date: HBJ, 1990

Grade Level: K-3

Summary: A man is visited in a dream by animals who implore him not to cut down a Kapok tree in the rain forest.

Reading/Writing Connections

1. As you read have students predict what each animal will say and then compare with the story.
2. Have students pretend that the tree was cut down and write a new ending for the story.
3. List the animals that spoke to the man. Have students look up one animal in the encyclopedia and share an interesting fact they learned.
4. Ask students to explain why this is not a true story.
5. Ask, "If you were the sloth, what would you tell the man?"
6. Make a Venn diagram comparing two of the animals from the rain forest.
7. Discuss the importance of the animals convincing the man to spare the tree.
8. Upon completion of the story draw a web on chart paper. Brainstorm events from the story and write them on each line. Have students write them down in proper sequence.
9. Have students keep an on-going Rain Forest Dictionary.
10. Discuss how the illustrations were done.

Library Connections

1. Share other books about rain forests or endangered animals. *Rain Forest* by Helen Coucher, 1988.
2. *Endangered Animals* by Lynn Stone, 1984.
3. *Animals in Danger* by Bobbie Whitcombe, 1988.
4. Show students where to find books about animals mentioned in the story.
5. Do an author study on Lynne Cherry.

Science Connections

1. Make a soda bottle terrarium. Plant a small plant in the soil and keep a weeklong observation chart.
2. Discuss food chains. Have students use pictures to create a food chain of the rain forest.
3. Create a food chain for an area in which you live.
4. Plant four seeds. Put each in a variety of conditions and see which one grows better.

Social Studies Connections

1. Research more information about where rain forests are located.
2. Locate the rain forest on a world map.
3. Study how animals and people need each other in every community.

Math Connections

1. Have students vote on their favorite animal. Graph the results

Language Arts Connections

2. Change the setting and write a new story.
3. Read some animal poems from *The Random House Book of Poetry for Children* and have students illustrate a poem or write their own poem.
4. Postcards: Draw a rain forest animal on the back of a card. On the other side write a message to a Congressman explaining why you are important to the rain forest.

Art Connections

1. Remind students that the man had a dream. Bend the clothes hanger into a loop and attach scrap materials with string. Have students hang it over their bed to catch their dreams.
2. Paint a mural of the rain forest.

Title: *The Great Kapok Tree*

Author: Lynne Cherry

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Summary: In the Amazon rain forest, a man is chopping down a great Kapok tree. He stops to rest and falls asleep. During this time, various creatures whisper in his ear and beg him not to destroy the rain forest..

Reading/Writing Connections

1. Ask the children what they think grows and lives in the rain forest.
2. Tell them that you are going to read them a story about the creatures of the rain forest.
3. Tell them to pay close attention to what is growing there.
4. Show the book. Talk about the author. Read the story.
5. Ask the children what types of things they saw in the rain forest. What do you think these animals eat?
6. Tell them that they are each going to make a snack using ingredients that are native to the rain forest.
7. Distribute ingredients and allow each student to make a cup-full of rain forest mix.
8. As they enjoy eating, their snack, discuss ways the rain forest is important.

Vocabulary/Spelling

Amazon	ancestors	ax	boa
canopy	constrictor	creatures	desert
generations	howling	kapok	lulled
oxygen	rain forest	smoldering	trunk

Library Connections

1. Share other books that have "recipes" in them. Judy Blume's *Freckle Juice* is about a boy who desperately wants freckles and will stop at nothing to get them.
2. *Stone Soup* tells about an interesting recipe for soup

Science/Mathematics Connections

1. Layers of the rain forest
2. Tell the students that there are 4 layers of the rain forest and that different creatures live in each.
3. Hand out blank flip-flap booklets.
4. Have the students label each flap with a different layer.

5. Inside each flap, they will draw an animal and a plant that lives/grows in each layer.

Social Studies/Mathematics Connections

1. Map Study
2. Show the children where the Amazon rain forest is on the map.
3. List which countries the rain forests are in.
4. Poster Design
5. List reasons for not destroying the rain forest on the board.
6. Have students create posters that would persuade someone to stop the destruction.
7. Put the posters up in the community.

Language Arts Connections

1. Who Am I?
2. Have each student choose an animal that lives in the rain forest.
3. Each student will write a descriptive paragraph in which they tell where their animals lives, what it eats, how it looks, etc.
4. Allow students to share their paragraphs and have their classmates try to guess which animal they are describing.

Art Connections

1. Create a Creature
2. Based on what the students have learned about the rain forest in terms of weather, temperature, etc., have them create an animal that could survive in the rain forest.
3. Have them think of a name for their creature and make a name tag for it.
4. Share creatures.

Title: The Great Kapok Tree

Author: Lynne Cherry

Grade Level: 2-5

Summary: One day two men come to the rain forest. The older man told the other to cut down the Kapok tree. After a while of cutting, the younger man became tired and fell asleep. As he slept, many different animals tried to convince the man of the importance of not cutting down their home.

Reading/Writing Connections:

1. Show the cover of the book. Take predictions of what the story might be about.
2. Before reading the story, read the section prior to the title page which gives a brief description of the Amazon Rain Forest. Locate the forest on a map so the children will have a better idea of what they will be discussing.
3. As the book is read, have the students point out details within the colorful pictures.
4. After reading the book, have the students write about the meaning of "What happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today," as told by the anteater. Have them share their ideas.

Vocabulary/Spelling:

ancestors	canopy	generations	Kapok tree	lulled
miracle	mist	murmured	oxygen	plodding
pollinate	rare	ruins	smoldering	troupe
underbrush	understory	wither	Yanomamo	

Library Connections:

1. Share other books written by the author: *When I'm Sleepy*, *Who's Sick Today*, and *Archie Follow Me*.
2. Share other books about the rain forest: *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, *One Day in the Tropical Rain Forest*, and *Journey into Hollow Tree*.

Science Connections:

1. Discuss the word habitat. Have them come up with reasons of why habitat is important and why it should be protected.
2. Discuss pollination of plants by bees
3. Explain what a food chain is. Have them answer the question, "What would happen if the food chain was broken?" Do an activity to illustrate the importance of a food chain (Ex. Candy = plants, children on hands and knees = small animals, children on knees = medium animals, and children walking = large animals).
4. Discuss erosion and how it affects land. Do an activity to show how erosion takes place using a dish pan, clay, dirt, sponge, and water.
5. Go over the words camouflage and adaptation. Go through the book and have the children point out the adaptations and ways of camouflage of the animals. Use other books if needed.
6. Discuss oxygen and other elements. List ways these are important to living things.

Social Studies Connections:

1. Research the rain forest. Identify the locations of rain forests on the world map.
2. Discuss the real Kapok tree and its uses.
3. Compare and contrast the rain forest with the children's home.
4. Discuss Arbor Day. Give each child a tree to plant at his/her home.

English/ Language Arts Connection:

1. Have the children identify the sounds made by the animals. Let the children try portraying these animals as they spoke to the man.
2. Discuss different styles of poetry. Some examples might be rhyme, haiku, and color. Have the students write a poem about the rain forest illustrating its importance and beauty.
3. Have the children write a letter to an adult of choice explaining why we should support efforts to protect the rain forests.

Art Connections:

1. Have the students create a triarama showing a scene from the rain forest.

Music Connections:

2. As children work on independent work, play background music of sounds of the rain forest.

Math Connections:

3. Have students find the average sizes (length and weight) of the different animals mentioned in the book. Create two graphs showing these sizes. How do they compare to the average 9-10 year old?

Title: The Great Kapok Tree. Harcourt Brace, 1990.

Author: Lynn Cherry

Grade Level: 2-4

Summary: A man is going to chop down a tree in the Amazon Rain Forest. He stops to rest and falls asleep. As he sleeps, the many creatures of the rain forest try to convince him the importance of not cutting down their home.

Reading/Writing Connections

1. Preview the book (showing only cover and illustrations) encourage students to predict the events of the story.
2. As you read the story aloud discuss the different reasons the animals have to save the tree.
3. Students will choose an animal from the book. Ask them to complete the phrase, "If the tree frogs could talk..."
4. Discuss the importance of the rain forest.
5. Ask students to guess why a tree is the jackdaw for this book. Explain to them we will be planting a tree to represent the renewal of life, new beginnings, and growth.
6. Ask students to write a paragraph about what might of happened if the man cut the tree down

Vocabulary/Spelling

ancestors	canopy	creature	destroy	disappear
flower	forest	kapok	miracles	oxygen
pollinate	scampered	shadow	slithered	smoldering

Library Connections

1. Share other titles by the author: *A River Ran Wild*, *Archie*, and *Who's Sick Today*.
2. Share other books on the rain forest: Helen Cowcher's *Rain Forest*; Jean George's *One Day in a Tropical Rain Forest*; Don Lesson's *Inside the Amazing Rain Forest*; Augusta Dwyer's *Into the Amazon: The Struggle for the Rain Forest*

Social Studies Connections

1. On a blank map, have students color the areas of the world that have rain forests.
2. Plan an imaginary trip to the rain forest. Make sure to include: transportation, supplies they need, clothing to bring, and what they will see.

Science Connections

1. Students will have a sheet of the animals of the rain forest. Color, cut, and sort the animals into four categories: mammals, birds, reptiles, and insects.
2. Discuss different habitats of rain forest animals.
3. Plant a tree in the school yard. (jackdaw)

Math Connections

1. Weekly, students will measure the tree and record growth on a chart.
2. Show an example of a tree trunk. Count the number of rings on the trunk to determine the tree's age.

Language Arts Connections

1. Focus on descriptive verbs in the story. As a class, make a chart listing each animal and their corresponding action.

2. Create a poem about the rain forest animals.

Art Connections

1. On a blank bulletin board, make a mural of the rain forest. Use paints, colored pencils, and markers.

Publishing

1. Make a bulletin board, "If the animals of the rain forest could talk..." display students choice of animals and their statement on leaf pattern.