

CATCH a spark!

Using children's literature to SPARK CREATIVITY



The Christmas Pig

Written by J.K. Rowling
288 pages / Grades 2-6

A young boy faced with tough issues including bullying, divorce and the fear of letting go loses his most cherished friend and will go to any length to get him back. The magic of Christmas and the imagination of a beloved author bring a fast-paced adventure that will have students rooting for a little pig and a boy named Jack, who realize that hope will always be there, even in the hardest of times.

C Context

The concept of **personification**.

Proper nouns vs nouns. How does something change in its depiction by using a capital letter? (i.e. things vs. Things)

Morals and **mottos**

Feelings, principles and emotions. How do they drive us? How do we lose them and find them?

Vocabulary and **layers of meaning** - terms such as: disposable, waste, mislaid, lost

A Arts

Imagination and the creation of other worlds.

Perspective

T Themes

Courage

Bravery

Family

Acceptance

Letting go

Bullying

Divorce and blended families

Friendship

Love

C Create

Find your most cherished possession. Write its story, as if it were alive.

Ask students to participate in public speaking, explaining how they acquired their favorite possession. How did it get its name? What has it seen them through?

Make a list of principles, emotions and feelings, then choose two. Debate which is more powerful - (i.e. hope or happiness). How can you personify these things? Create a representation of what they look like.

H Heart Words

"That's what wakes Things up. Being used and absorbing human feelings..."

"Losing is part of living. But some of us live even though we're lost. That's what love does."

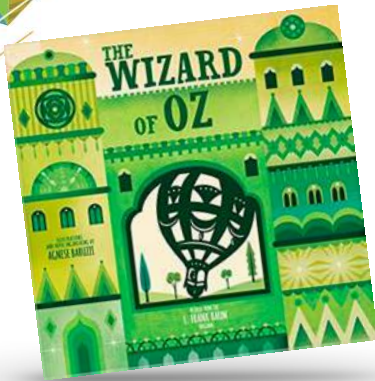
"What makes humans love Things so much?"

"...nothing can be lost for good until all hope has gone."



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The Wizard of Oz

Illustrations and Paper Engineering by Agnese Baruzzi
27 pages / All grades

The ever classic story comes alive in this edition with remarkable illustrations, comprised of stunning, intricate paper-cut engravings which feature layers, foreground and background details. No matter how well you know the story, this edition will cause you to look at it through a different lens.

C Context

Classic stories - what makes a classic and what does it mean to **abridge** or **retell** a story.

Friendship - the importance of friends in life's journey

A Arts

Paper-cut illustrations. Engage in a discussion around the intricacies and silhouette of these illustrations in contrast to the digital, colorful illustrations in the rest of the book.

Silhouettes

Layers - experiment with layers and pieces in media arts programs to manipulate digital art.

Foreground / background

Color palettes

Positive and negative space

T Themes

Courage

Bravery

Family

Friendship

Home

C Create

Take photographs of people and objects which comprise a tableau. Turn the picture into a silhouette, and cut them out in different pieces. Create an illustration using these silhouettes, considering color, layers, and perspective. Allow students limited color choices to create their scene. Have them write an artist statement.

Create the engraving of a scene/moment not included in the story. Which are the central elements you would include, and how?

H Heart Words

Ask students to consider the artistic nature of this book. What strikes them most about the paper-cut illustrations? Have them discuss with their peers their thoughts around how these illustrations lend themselves to the story. Does the darkness of the paper-cuts change the focus of the story at all?

Allow students to research and watch numerous tutorial videos and interviews regarding the process of cut-paper illustration to serve as inspiration.



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Colors of Habitats

Written by Stepanka Sekaninova, Jana Sedlackova /
Illustrated by Magdalena Konecna
32 pages / K-5

When was the last time you thought about color names? Deep Sea Blue or Forest Green? Why do they have those names? This gorgeously illustrated book looks at habitats around the world through the eyes of color. The drawings and paintings throughout the book are inspirational and will inspire research into the habitats themselves and the artistic nature of how they were done.

C Context

Habitats around the world. Included habitats (not exclusive): polar regions, deciduous forests, lakes, meadows, coral reefs, desert, rainforest, savannah, Mediterranean

Poetic language and prose

Diversity of nature's elements and creatures

A Arts

Color palettes

Color names

Elements of drawing and painting

Developing an **artistic eye, noticing** the world around you.

Harmony of color

Artistic vocabulary: hue, subdue, tone, harmony, complimentary

T Themes

Diversity

Color

Artistic and Visual representation

C Create

Create a color palette for a location in your world. Create a two page spread, like that in the book, for an environment you are familiar with. What are the primary colors you would use, and how would you name them?

**This could also be done digitally with a photograph, using the "color picker" to isolate certain colors and create new names for them.

Create the palette for an additional habitat you have studied.

Create new colors and name them.
Attach an artist statement as to the origin of the name you have created.

H Heart Words

"A geyser of colors is swirling in the jungle, rampaging."

"Silent, the forest murmurs to the rhythm of brooks and springs."

"Fragrant oranges put their ears to the lips of olives."

Ask students to choose three colors in the book they feel are most appropriately named. Why?



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The Sleeping Beauty

Written by New York City Ballet, Illustrated by Valeria Docampo
40 pages / Grades K-5

Known for their presentation of classic stories through dance, the New York City Ballet has gone a step further with this beautifully illustrated book, which follows the storyline, choreography, costumes and scenery of their production of this classic tale. A perfect book for a young ballerina, but also a conversation starter for comparing versions of stories, as this follows the ballet's storyline, rather than the better-known Disney version.

C Context

Vocabulary - go on word hunts

- the book has extensive use of descriptive adjectives.
- dance vocabulary is woven in throughout the story

Adaptations of stories: how is this version different from the traditionally known version of the same story? Why do you think it was adapted in this way?

A Arts

Movement in illustration

Ballet basics and the elements of dance - use of body in space and time, energy and movement.

Costumes / Scenery - essential elements, design and color

History of the NYC Ballet - who is George Balanchine, choreography, telling story through dance

Music telling story: Listen to Tchaikovsky's Sleeping Beauty. Discuss elements of music and where the story is clearest.

T Themes

Movement and storytelling

Love conquering all

Good vs. Evil

C Create

Choose a moment in the story. Create the scene through movement, focusing on the elements of dance.

Play moments of the music for students. Based on the story, which moment do they believe is depicted in the section listened to? Why?

**There are numerous clips of the NYC Ballet production of Sleeping Beauty available on YouTube. Play audio only for one of these, allow students to discuss, and then show them the piece.

Pull up photographs of the real production and compare them to the illustrations.

H Heart Words

Due to the nature of the story, capturing dance, ask students to identify the illustration which most feels as though it is leaping off the page and touching their own heart. What is it about the illustration that seems to do this?



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The Nutcracker Comes To America

Written by Chris Barton, Illustrated by Cathy Gendron
36 pages / Grades K-4

We think of The Nutcracker as being a longstanding American holiday tradition, but in reality, it has only been here since the 1940s, brought to America by three brothers growing up in Utah who staged their own production of the story on a tiny budget in San Francisco. Help your students understand the why behind the magic as a beloved holiday tale truly comes to life.

C

Context

Historical context of holiday traditions.

Timelines and historical fiction. The book includes archival photographs and real life event timelines at the end of the book to pique student interest more.

Staying focused and determined despite humble beginnings.

A

Arts

Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite

Be sure to expose students not just to the visual elements of ballet, but also through the musical elements of the original piece.

Telling story through ballet

- There are numerous versions and clips of this ballet readily available on YouTube from multiple famed ballet companies, including the NYC Ballet.

Process of illustration There is a detailed, inspiring note from the illustrator that takes students inside the creative process.

T

Themes

Perseverance and dedication

Following a passion

Holiday traditions

C

Create

Play a movement of the music - ask students to visualize what they hear. Place the music within the frame of the story and analyze the movement of the music and how it fits.

Read the story without sharing pictures. Ask students to represent how they visualize the characters, particularly in the land of sweets.

Challenge students to research the beginnings of a different holiday tradition, from any holiday.

H

Heart Words

"Like a trio of dancers trying to share two spotlights, the brothers often wove in and out of one another's view."



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The Remarkable Journey of Coyote Sunrise

Written by Dan Gemeinhart

352 pages / Grades 4-8

There are some characters that grab our hearts from page one of a book. Coyote Sunrise is one of them. This is a book for the heart, that celebrates what is most important in life - the connections we make, the memories we hold close, and the idea of being open to whatever comes across our path - and all done with a touch of humor. Coyote will become part of every reader who lets her in, as will her journey.



C

Context

Historical context of holiday traditions.

Timelines and historical fiction. The book includes archival photographs and real life event timelines at the end of the book to pique student interest more.

Staying focused and determined despite humble beginnings.

Recognizing small moments as big moments.

A

Arts

Visualization - noticing the things around you. Cultivating an artistic eye. What is it you tend to focus on?

Finding music in the sounds around you (i.e. the music of someone's voice)

T

Themes

Courage

Growing up

Friendship

Overcoming obstacles

Finding joy in small moments

Recognizing sadness, recognizing happiness.

Loss and acceptance

C

Create

Challenge your students to create their own memory box with special friends/family as Coyote does.

What are 3 questions you would ask someone to see if they are a match with you and could "travel on your bus"? Take a poll and ask people around you. What would you do based on their answers?

Write a script or story about a journey across the country with up to 5 other people. Who are they, why do you connect with them, where are you going?

Create a soundtrack for Coyote's road trip. Justify your choices.

H

Heart Words

"It was a quiet moment, and maybe one that anyone watching from outside my heart wouldn't even have noticed, but I tell you it was a big moment all the same."

"...wherever your hearts wants to go, go there and don't look back."

"Sometimes trusting someone is about the scariest thing you can do. But you know what? It's a lot less scary than being all alone."

"There's so much sadness in the world."

"There's so much happiness in the world."

"Starts are important. Once-upon-a-times are important."

"Maybe we're all a little broken. Maybe we're all a little fragile. Maybe that's why we need each other so much."

