

The Polar Express

Summary

Over the course of 5 days students will complete 10 journal entries with pictures completing 2 every day. Using the google lit trip of The Polar Express students will take a magical journey to the North Pole and answering the discussion questions in their journal along with a picture relating to the book. They are improving their writing skills, thinking and reasoning skills, and their comprehensive knowledge of a book.

Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 2

[Reading: Literature Standard 7](#)

Time Frame

5 class periods of 60 minutes each

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication

Materials

You will need a computer and projector or use your smart board if you have one to show the presentation in front of whole class. You will need to open the file titled "The Polar Express" that is attached. It will open up in google earth. You will follow the yellow pins going in order from top to bottom. You need to make a journal for each student. See the attached file for a journal template. You will change each of the discussion questions and the instructions for what to draw on each page, the questions come from each of the pins on the google lit trip. There will be 20 pages in total. Every page will have a picture and questions for students to answer. When the students are asked to summarize the story there will be no picture needed so you can just have two writing pages for the students. Also you need little bells for each student to have and ring. Hot chocolate, little cups, and napkins to hand out to each student at the end of the entire lesson. If you have time to watch the movie you will need a copy of The Polar Express.

Background for Teachers

Must have read the book The Polar Express and be familiar with the themes of the story. Be sure to know the discussion questions and what you want the students to do for each activity/discussion questions.

Student Prior Knowledge

Students need to know how to write well and use complete sentences.

Intended Learning Outcomes

Students will gain understanding of the plot of a story as well as characters. They will write daily and improve their writing skills and use information they have read to infer and answer the discussion questions.

Instructional Procedures

Day 1: Start by asking questions to the students to know their background knowledge. Start by asking

if any have traveled in a car, airplane, and train. Discuss what a train is, sounds like, looks like, etc. Tell them they are going to go on a magical trip to the North Pole! Don't tell them the name of the book you will be reading about! Give them their journals, explain a little what they will be doing with them and putting in them. Have them draw their first picture of them in their room and where they would be sleeping, make sure they know they should color their pictures. Pull up the google lit trip and open the pin my room. Read aloud and have them respond to the discussion questions in their journal first and then discuss as a class. Move to the next pin and read. Discuss what a conductor is and what he does. Have them draw a picture of a train with a conductor and then have them answer the questions. Discuss as a class. Day 2: Review what they have done so far and then pull up the dark forest. Read aloud and then give them the option of either drawing a picture of other animals they may see in the forest or a map from their house to the North Pole including things they may see along the way. Have them respond to the questions in their journal and then discuss as a class. Move to high mountaintop and read the pin. Have them draw a picture of a really cool roller coaster they have been on or have them design their own roller coaster. Respond to discussion questions in journal and discuss as a class. Day 3: Review what is happening and where have you been. Read the great polar ice cap and have them draw a picture of what they think the North Pole looks like adding lots of detail! Answer the question and discuss as a class. Move on to the North Pole. Have them draw a picture of a gift they would like from Santa himself. Have students write down their responses in their journals to questions and then discuss as a class. Day 4: Have the bells ready. Review. Pull up Santa's sleigh and read as a class. Explain what the bell means and pass out a bell to each student. Have them ring the bell together to make the most beautiful sound. Have them draw a picture of Santa's sleigh and reindeer. Have them answer the question in their journal and then discuss as a class. Move to next pin. Read aloud and talk about how things have been great and happy but now the mood has changed to sad. Have them draw the hole in their pocket with the expression on their face of how it made them feel. Respond to questions and discuss as a class. Day 5: Have students wear their pj's to class if they choose! Have hot chocolate ready to make or already made! Review and read aloud back home pin. There will be no picture for this one! Just have them summarize everything that has happened up until this point. Read Christmas morning and have them draw a picture of them with the bell and show how happy it makes them. Answer the questions in their journal and discuss as a class. Wrap up the book and the meaning behind the bell and behind the story. This would be a great time to watch the movie, have hot chocolate, and show what they have been reading about using their 5 senses! This is also a great time for the students to finish up their pictures adding color and detail! If you don't have time to watch the movie make sure you give the students ample time to finish their journals before they turn them in. Have fun with this lesson, there are so many things you could do with it! The students journal will be your assessment!

Assessment Plan

Student performance will be assessed through their journals and how well they were able to answer the questions and use their imagination through their pictures.

Rubrics

[The Polar Express](#)

Bibliography

Google Earth Van Allsburg, C. (2010). The Polar Express. Twentieth-fifth anniversary ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Authors

[McKinley Powell](#)