

The Pumpkin Runner

Summary

This lesson focuses on the book, The Pumpkin Runner, by Arnold while integrating Language Arts with Social Studies. It is a tool to guide student thinking about what a moral of a story is, and it also provides an introduction to different areas in Australia, including how the people use the land there.

Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 3

[Reading: Literature Standard 2](#)

Additional Core Ties

Social Studies - 3rd Grade

[Standard 1 Objective 3](#)

Time Frame

3 class periods of 60 minutes each

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Social & Civic Responsibility

Materials

You will need the book, The Pumpkin Runner by Marsha Diane Arnold as well as a variety of interesting informational texts for kids about the people and land of Australia. Computer/Internet SmartBoard or large Screen

Student Prior Knowledge

It would be helpful for students to have some familiarity with the idea that there are different kinds of stories in literature (including fables).

Intended Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to describe the moral of the story (The Pumpkin Runner) by relating the story's details to another fable (The Tortoise and the Hare) in which they are already familiar. 2. Students will be able to identify three ways people use the physical environment in Australia by drawing and writing.

Instructional Procedures

Session 1: 1. Start by explicitly stating that the students will be working on two learning goals while we are reading and learning from one book. Write the learning goals (the listed intended learning outcomes) on the board. Read the goals together and explain that the focus will be on goal number 1 first. 2. Ask the class, "what is a moral of a story?" If the class is generally familiar with fables and morals from stories, then move on to step 3. If not, show students the pdf packet from the listed Scholastic Teaching Resources, and let the students see what Aesop's Fables look like and what kinds of morals are found from them. Also, complete the worksheets from the pdf for the Tortoise and the Hare after reading that particular story. 3. If students are generally familiar with fables and morals from stories, then read to them The Tortoise and the Hare (from the listed website) and discuss what the moral(s) of the story is (slow and steady wins the race, keep going, etc.) and write answer(s) on

the board to refer back to. Then, tell students to be thinking about what moral could be determined from the next story (The Pumpkin Runner). 4. Using the Google Earth lit trip, start the class in the location in which they live, and then travel all the way to Australia. 5. Use the prompts outlined throughout the Lit Trip to enhance comprehension as necessary. Pause at the end of the book portion of the lit trip to have students discuss in groups of twos or threes what they thought the moral of the story could be. After giving them a few minutes to discuss it, bring the class back together and write their answers on the board. 6. Have students look on the board at the two lists of answers (one for The Tortoise and the Hare, and one for The Pumpkin Runner). On a piece of paper, have the students write one moral of the story (The Pumpkin Runner) and explain why they think that it is a moral of the story (this serves as an assessment to see what they are thinking). Session 2: 1. Re-read The Pumpkin Runner aloud to refresh students' memories about the story. Using the associated Lit Trip, show students the portion for the real-life hero by first explaining that the main character is based on a real person. (This portion includes the YouTube video about Cliff Young). Discuss how the story has become like a fable or a tall tale for the people in Australia (now many of them will tell it like it is told in the story). Ask the class, "what elements made it feel more like a fable or tall tale? and what parts were true and what parts were embellished?" Have students discuss in groups of four first before discussing as a whole class. 2. Introduce the question: "How does the setting (Australia) affect the story?" Display the overall map with markers from the lit trip again, and remind them where the story events and real events took place. This time, have students notice what kind of land is in each area (Australia has different kinds of climate; refer to the background information about Australia). 3. Hand a blank map page out to each student. Explain that they will be working on objective 2 in this part of the lesson, but first, they need to become familiar with the land of Australia. Allow students to work in partners while looking through informational texts about Australia. Instruct them to draw and label at least 3 things that they find out about the land or what the people do there (for example, in some parts, there are sheep farmers and in other places by the ocean, there are people who fish). Allow the students to work on this for the remaining time. Session 3: 1. Allow more time (as necessary) for students to complete their maps. As a class have students volunteer to share what they found specifically. Guide the discussion to teach about all of the different areas and kinds of land in Australia, and how people have used it over the years. During this discussion, have students take turns drawing on a large SmartBoard map of Australia as they volunteer to share what they had read about. 2. On a sheet of paper, have each student write about 3 different ways people use the physical environment in Australia, including a related drawing. 3. De-brief: Review the two goals associated with the book, The Pumpkin Runner. Have a brief discussion with the students about what they learned (metacognition), how they can apply the new knowledge (either about morals from stories or Australia), and what was easy or hard for them to understand in the lesson (feedback for future teaching).

Strategies for Diverse Learners

The amount of scaffolding can easily be adjusted throughout the entire lesson for each student's needs. To challenge gifted students, instruct them to complete a Venn Diagram for the two included stories in order to compare and contrast elements which support the moral of each story. For struggling students or for students who have special needs in the classroom, use more guided questions, include the extra worksheet activity as a class or small group for the Tortoise and the Hare, and label and list important key words for the lesson (fable, moral, Australia, land, people, climate, farmer, runner, etc.).

Assessment Plan

There are two assessments directly related to the two learning objectives stated: the first is to have students write the moral of the story, The Pumpkin Runner, and explain why they think it is the moral

of the story; and second, to have the students identify three ways people use the land in Australia.

Rubrics

[The land of Australia](#)

[The Pumpkin Runner: Moral of the Story](#)

Authors

[Julie Delaney](#)