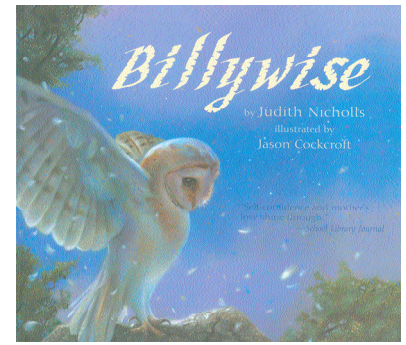


IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES TO USE WITH BILLYWISE

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Before Reading:

1. Use a KWL or similar form and have students work individually or in pairs to write what they think they already know about owls. With younger students you might have them answer questions like: What are owls? Where do they live? What do they eat? Who are their enemies? What is special about owls? Next have students write down what they would like to learn about owls.
2. Use the anticipation guide, *What's the Truth About Owls?* instead of a KWL. The answers are: F, T, T, F, T, F, T, F, T, F, F, T, F, T.
3. Ask students to think about a situation that was scary – not “jumping off the cliff” scary, but something that they were reluctant to do or try. Have them think about why it was scary. Then have them share the incident or experience with a partner. Next have pairs form groups of four and share again making sure to talk about why it was scary. Come back together as a class and list possible causes of scary situations such as the unknown, thinking something is too hard, not knowing how to do it, etc. Then talk about things that might make it more difficult such as teasing from others and things that might make it easier such as encouragement from others or someone showing you how by modeling or helping you step-by-step.

During Reading:

1. Have students imagine they are Billywise high up in the tree and not knowing how to fly.
2. Tell students to listen to the kinds of words the author uses and how she uses some of them over and over.

During Rereading:

1. During the second reading, point out some of the poetic language such as: mole-black hole, fern-brushed wood, and shadowy glade. Notice alliteration: scritch-scratch, murmured moth, fondly feeding, squeaked squirrel, a squash and a squeeze, wings to the watching wood.
2. With older students you can point out the assonance (same vowel sounds) such as “slide through the air, as silently as moonlight – to glide through the midnight air” and internal rhyme (rhyme within a line – not just at the end) such as mole-black hole and small ball of fluff.

After Reading:

1. List some of the rhyming words that have different spelling: rough, tough, fluff – stare, glare, dare, air – tried, glide, side –there, share – me, tree – outspread, said.
2. Discuss how it has stanzas and refrains similar to poems and songs. Are the refrains always the same? If not, how are they different?
3. There is so much beautiful language in *Billywise* that this might be a good book to use for the Golden Line page although it can be used with any book. Students find a sentence or phrase that appealed to them because of sound, language, or content. They copy it on the paper and then write why they chose it. They might like the way it sounds or it might remind them of something.

4. Explain about cause and effect. Use the Cause and Effect page to review events in *Billywise*.
5. Refer to the list made about scary situations. Have student think about what made them finally overcome being scared (if they did). Was there something or someone who convinced them (maybe without intending to, such as the crowded nest that made Billywise finally decide to fly)?
6. Read *Kindergarten Rocks* by Katie Davis in which a young boy is worried about attending Kindergarten. Let students fold a paper in half and illustrate with pictures of being scared and after overcoming it. Students can choose Billywise, the boy from this book, or themselves.
7. Students can think about something that was hard for them to do when they were little and see if they can remember how they started to do it, who helped them, and how they finally mastered it—imagining how they felt at the time and describing their probable frustrations, wishes, and struggles while they learned. They should include people who helped and possibly those who didn't by doing things like being impatient or teasing. Have them tell their story to a partner. The partner can ask qualifying questions about things if they want more information. Then ask each student to write their story down with help from their partner. The partner can remind them of things they might be forgetting or suggest words and ways of saying things. After the first person has written their story, the partner can tell a story and then write it down. This activity may take more than one writing time.
8. Have students pretend they are Billywise and imagine what he saw on his first flight. Tell them to write about it and describe it so well that others can picture it easily. They should describe at least five things.
9. Students can draw what the world looks like to Billywise as he is flying from his nest.
10. Read some nonfiction books about owls. Compare owls with some other kinds of birds such as robins, crows, or sparrows. Use a Venn Diagram or similar graphic.
11. Use some of the ideas from the included page “Picture Books and Beginning Research,” by Nancy Polette to write about owls.
12. Read *Stella Luna* by Janell Cannon. Compare and contrast Billywise and Stella Luna using a Venn Diagram.
12. Write an acrostic poem for Billywise.

Other Related Books

Barn Owl by Sally Tagholm and Illustrated by Bert Kitchen
The Barn Owls by Tony Johnston and Illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray
The Moon of the Owls by Jean Craighead George and Illustrated by Wendell Minor
Owl Babies by Martin Waddell and Illustrated by Patrick Benson
Owl Moon by Jane Yolen and Illustrated by John Schoenherr
The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark by Jill Tomlinson (easy chapter)
Owls by Adrienne Mason and Illustrated by Nancy Gray Ogle
Owls by Timothy Levi Biel (Zoobooks)
Owly by Mike Thaler and Illustrated by David Wiesner
Stella Luna Written and Illustrated by Janell Cannon